The Three Books of Meqabyan

A CC0 1.0 English Translation from Amharic

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The Books of Meqabyan — Translation Continuation

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This file continues from `translation.md` (1 Meqabyan Chapter 1). Same source chain (Amharic of the EOTC Bible via nehemiah-osc.org), same CC0 dedication, same methodology of literal-but-readable rendering with footnote-style notes for difficult passages.

The First Book of Meqabyan

መጽሐፈ መቃብያን ቀዳማዊ

Chapter 2

Introduction

Chapter 2 introduces the protagonist trio of 1 Meqabyan: **Maqabis the Benjamite** (መቃቢስ) and his three sons. The setting shifts from the abstract idol-temple culture of Chapter 1 into the active narrative: the king's officers find the sons, demand sacrifice to Ṣiruṣaydan's gods, are refused, and a confrontation begins. The chapter consists of three movements: (1) the demand and the brothers' creation-theology confession of faith (vv. 1–5); (2) a hymnic catalogue of their warrior prowess and the failed first arrest attempt (vv. 6–14); (3) the people's lament, the brothers' eastward prayer, and a first death-and-resurrection scene (vv. 15–28).

Several features in this chapter are diagnostic of the book's wider theology. The **geography is composite** — Chaldea (ከለዳውያን) appears here for the first time, joined to Midian and Mede country (Ch. 1 named only Midian and Moab); this expansion treats the pagan East as a single moral territory rather than as historically distinct peoples. The **creation-confession in v. 5** (heaven, earth, sea, sun, moon, stars, clouds) is a deliberate inversion of Ṣiruṣaydan's claim at 1:27 that *his idols* created the heavens and the stars — the brothers correctly reassign creation to the God of their fathers. The **patriarchal invocation in v. 22** (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) and the explicit Genesis cross-reference in v. 26 (Israel entering Egypt, Jacob's prayer) lock the brothers into covenant-history in a way Chapter 1 did not. And the **first death-and-resurrection event in vv. 27–28** establishes the resurrection theme that will dominate 3 Meqabyan.

The eponym moment occurs in v. 14: the king's troops, threatening the city, refer to the brothers as "the Meqabyans" (መቃብያንን) — this is the verse from which the entire trilogy takes its title. The sons themselves are not yet named here; their names (Abya, Sēlā, Pander/Fentos) emerge in subsequent chapters.

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1 There was a certain man from the tribe of Benjamin, whose name was called Maqabis.

2 He had three sons, fair of countenance and exceedingly strong; and they were beloved by every people throughout the dominion of Ṣiruṣaydan — in the land of the Chaldeans, in Midian, and in the country of the Medes.

3 When [the king's officers] found them, they said to them: *"As the king has commanded, will you not bow down to the gods of Ṣiruṣaydan? Will you not offer sacrifice?*

4 *And if you refuse, we will seize you and bring you before the king; and as the king has commanded, we will destroy all your possessions."*

5 Those handsome young men answered them: *“We have the God of our fathers, to whom we bow down — He who created heaven and earth, the sea and what is in it, the sun and the moon, the stars and the clouds. He is the true God whom we worship and in whom we trust.”*

> *Note on 2:5:* The creation-formula here directly inverts Ṣiruṣaydan’s claim at 1:26–27 that his idols created the heavens, the earth, the sea, the sun and moon, the stars, the winds and the rains. The brothers’ speech is functioning as a creedal corrective placed inside the narrative.

6 Those officers of the king were four commanders, and the attendants who bore their arms were fifty for each one.

7 When they wished to seize these holy ones, [the brothers] escaped from their hands, and none could touch them. For those young men were warriors of utterly overpowering strength; they took up shield and spear and went forth.

8 Among them was one who would strangle a bear and kill it — he would choke it like a chicken on the spot.

9 Among them was one who would kill a lion with a single stone, or with a single blow of a staff.

10 Among them was one who in time of battle, with one stroke of a single sword, would kill a man at once; and so their name and their renown were proclaimed throughout all the land of Moab and of the Chaldeans.

> *Note on 2:8–10:* This warrior-catalogue is unusual for a martyrology. Most ancient martyr narratives (including LXX 2 Maccabees 7) depict the victims as passive sufferers whose witness consists in their endurance. Here, the Meqabyan brothers are physically formidable — feats reminiscent of Samson (Judg. 14:5–6, lion-slaying) and of David’s mighty men (2 Sam. 23:8–23). The composition appears to be staging a martyrdom-of-warriors: men who *could* fight successfully but choose surrender to a higher commandment. This frames the eventual death in vv. 27 as a freely chosen offering rather than a fight lost.

11 They were warriors of great strength; and they had comeliness, and the loveliness of speech.

12 Moreover, the beauty of their outward appearance was wonderful; but because they worshiped God and did not fear death, the beauty of their inward heart surpassed all.

13 When they had terrified the troops, none was able to seize them; being mighty, they went up to a high mountain and escaped.

14 Then those troops returned to the city and shut the gate of the fortress; and they terrified the people, saying: *“Unless you bring us those warriors — the Meqabyans — we will burn your city with fire, and we will send word to the king and lay waste your country.”*

> *Note on 2:14:* This is the eponym verse. The troops apply the collective designation መቃብያንን (“the Meqabyans”) to Maqabis’s sons. From this naming the entire trilogy takes its title. The Ge‘ez form, retained in the Amharic, is the source of all later renderings (Meqabyan, Maqabyan, Maccabean in popular English usage).

15 Then the people of the country — the poor and the rich, men and women, the orphan whose father and mother had died, and the widows — all came out and cried out together. They turned their eyes toward the mountain and cried out to them: *“Do not destroy us and our country!”*

16 And at that time they wept together; and because of God, they were afraid.

17 They turned their faces toward the east, and stretching out their hands, they prayed together to God, saying: *“O Lord, shall we say ‘No’ to these men who have broken your commandment and your law?*

> *Note on 2:17:* The eastward orientation in prayer is a fixed EOTC liturgical posture (cf. *Didascalia* II.57, retained in Ethiopian practice). The opening question is the brothers seeking divine permission to refuse the king’s edict — a notable feature: the resistance is not framed as spontaneous defiance but as a sanctioned act sought through prayer. Compare Daniel 6:10 (Daniel praying with windows opened toward Jerusalem).

18 *“As for us, we have no desire to hear the word of that lawless man who does not believe in your law but trusts in gold and silver, and in stone and wood made by the hand of man.*

19 *“While You are the Creator who saves and who kills, he makes himself as though they [the idols] had created him; he is one who sheds the blood of man and eats the flesh of man.*

> *Note on 2:19:* The phrase *“sheds the blood of man and eats the flesh of man”* picks up the child-sacrifice motif from 1:14 (where the priests of Ṣiruṣaydan ate from defiled sacrifices) and intensifies it. The accusation is now placed in the mouth of the martyrs themselves as part of their grounds for refusal.

20 *“As for us, we have no desire to see that lawless man’s face or to hear his speech.*

21 *“But if You command us, we will go to him; because we have trusted in You, we will hand over our bodies to death; and when he commands, ‘Sacrifice to the gods,’ we will not hearken to the word of that lawless man.*

22 *“O Lord, God of our fathers — who did Your will and remained steadfast in Your law — You who search the kidneys and the heart, God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob: as for us, we have trusted in You with our whole heart.*

> *Note on 2:22:* The triple-patriarch invocation (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) is the standard EOTC liturgical formula; the phrase ኩላሊትንና ልቡናን የምትመረምር (“who searches the kidneys and the heart”) is a direct rendering of Psalm 7:9 / Jeremiah 11:20, indicating that the composer worked within a sustained Septuagintal idiom even though the narrative content is original.

23 *“You search the heart of man and discern both the sinner and the righteous; nothing is hidden from You; what is concealed is revealed before You.*

24 *“As for us, we have no other God besides You.*

25 *“But for the sake of Your holy name — that we may give our bodies over to death — be for us, in this work in which we submit ourselves to You, strength, firmness, and refuge.*

26 *“When Israel went down into the land of Egypt, You heard the prayer of Jacob; now also, O Holy God, we entreat You.”*

> *Note on 2:26:* The cross-reference is to Genesis 46:1–4 (Jacob’s vision at Beersheba on the way down into Egypt). This is one of the clearest intertextual citations in Meqabyan; the author treats Genesis as authoritative source-material and casts the brothers’ situation as a typological replay of Jacob’s covenant-confirmation at the threshold of exile.

27 When their appearance was utterly resplendent, and the two parties stood face to face and beheld one another, swords of fire descended like terrifying lightning; and in that moment they [the swords] cut their necks and slew them. And at that same moment they rose up alive as before.

> *Note on 2:27:* The Amharic phrase ሁለቱም ሰዎች literally reads “the two persons/parties.” The natural narrative reading is that the *two groups* — the brothers on the one side, the king’s soldiers on the other — stood facing one another (i.e. both parties confronting each other) at the moment of the heavenly intervention. The number “two” is unexpected if read as referring to specific individuals, since the sons of Maqabis are three. Confidence: **medium**. An alternative reading (taking “two” as a reference to two attackers, or to two of the four officers from v. 6) cannot be ruled out from the Amharic alone; verification against the Geʿez of Frankfurt Rüppel II 7 or EMML 515 would decide the matter.
>
> The fire-sword motif is widely paralleled: cf. the cherubim’s flaming sword in Gen. 3:24 and the angelic flame-sword of the *Cave of Treasures* and *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*. Here the swords function not against the martyrs but as the *agent of their resurrection* — they kill and immediately glorify. This is the first miracle scene in the book and the first dramatic enactment of the resurrection theology developed later in 3 Mq.

28 The beauty of their appearance became utterly glorious; they shone more brightly than the sun; they became more lovely than before.

Chapter 2 — Confidence summary

Verse	Issue	Confidence	Note
2:1–5	Straightforward narrative	High	
2:6	“Four commanders, fifty attendants each” reading	High	Standard idiomatic distributive
2:8–10	Bear-strangling, lion-killing — figurative or literal?	High (lexically)	Reading is unambiguous; the figurative/literal question is interpretive, not textual
2:17	“Shall we say ‘no’ to these men” — petition or rhetorical?	Medium	Best read as a petition for divine permission to refuse
2:19	“Eats the flesh of man” — picks up 1:14 child sacrifice	High	The lexical match is exact
2:22	“Kidneys and heart” — confirms Septuagintal idiom	High	Verbatim Ps 7:9 / Jer 11:20 LXX
2:27	“The two parties” — narrative function of “two”	Medium	See note; Geʿez collation needed

Source: nehemiah-osc.org Amharic, 1-maccabees/2, retrieved via user paste. Verse numbering as in source.
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Chapter 3

Introduction

Chapter 3 is the **martyrdom climax**. A voice from heaven names the three sons explicitly — **Abya, Sila, Fentos** (አብያ፥ ሲላ፥ ፈንቶስ) — and commands them to accept martyrdom. They are scourged, imprisoned three days, brought to the public square, tortured with thick rods and whips, then exposed to wild beasts (leopard, bear, lion) — which bow down to the saints and turn against the king’s troops, killing seventy-five soldiers in the process. The chapter’s most striking narrative beat is in vv. 28–31: **two younger brothers** (unnamed) appear, offering to free the three; the three refuse to flee, and the two younger brothers join them in martyrdom. **Five brothers in total** stand before the king. All five are then burned alive in a sulfur-and-pitch fueled furnace; angels receive their souls and carry them to Paradise with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The “five sons of Maqabis” formulation is distinctive to the Ethiopian narrative; it has no parallel in the LXX 2 Maccabees account of the seven brothers. The bowing-beasts topos is paralleled most strongly in Daniel 6:22 and recurs across Christian martyr-acts (e.g. *Acts of Paul and Thecla*).

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1 And there came a voice from heaven, saying: *“Servants of God Most High — Abya, Sila, Fentos! As you have seen these who died and rose again before your eyes, so also after your own death shall you rise; and your faces shall shine in the kingdom of heaven.*

2 *“Go with those men, and there receive your martyrdom.”*

3 Then they prayed and gave thanks, and bowed down to God; neither death nor the punishments of the king terrified them.

4 And they went to those officers; they were like a lamb without malice and offered them no fight. When they reached them, the officers seized them and beat them; they bound them and scourged them, and brought them before the king and made them stand in his presence.

5 And the king answered them: *“You rebels — how is it that you will not sacrifice to the gods? How is it that you will not bow down?”*

6 Those holy and blessed ones, the elect and joyful, the wonder-precious-as-jewels brothers Abya, Sila, and Fentos answered him with one voice.

7 They said to that pestilent king: *“As for us, we will not sacrifice to defiled idols which have neither knowledge nor understanding; nor will we bow down to them.*

8 *“Further: we will not bow down to idols which are the work of human hands — gold and silver, stone and wood — which have neither soul nor mind nor knowledge, which do no good to those who do good to them, and do no evil to those who do evil to them.”*

9 And the king answered: *“Why do you do this? They know those who slander them and wrong them — why do you slander the honorable gods?”*

10 They answered: *“Because in our sight they are as nothing — therefore we slander them; and we will not honor them.”*

11 And the king said: *“According to the measure of the wickedness of your deeds I will punish you; with grievous torment and with scourges, and with fire I will destroy the comeliness of your appearance.*

12 *“Now then — tell me whether you will sacrifice to the gods or whether you will not; and if not, I will raise scourging and sword against you.”*

13 They answered: *“As for us, we will not sacrifice to defiled idols; nor will we bow down.”* And the king commanded that they be beaten with thick rods, then scourged with whips, and after that flayed until their inward parts were visible.

14 After this he commanded that they be bound and shut up in prison, until he should take counsel how to punish them and put them to death.

15 And they took them and, without pity, bound them in prison with strong bonds; and they remained in prison three days and three nights.

16 After three days the king commanded the crier to go about summoning his nobles and counselors, his officers, and the elders of the country to assemble.

17 And when King Ṣiruṣaydan was seated in the public square, he commanded that those honorable ones — Abya, Sila, and Fentos — be brought; bound and wounded, they stood before him.

18 And the king said: *“In these three days of your sitting, have you turned with a turning of repentance? Or do you remain in your former wickedness?”*

19 Those honorable soldiers of God answered: *“As for us, we are resolute. We will never consent to worship an idol full of sin and wickedness, such as you yourself worship.”*

20 Then that criminal, in his anger, commanded that they be hung up and that their wounds be reopened; and their blood ran upon the ground.

21 Again he commanded that they be burned with torches and that their flesh be roasted; and they did so. And those honorable men said to him: *“You godless one — speak on! According to the measure by which you multiply our punishment, our reward is multiplied.”*

22 Again he commanded that ravening beasts — leopard and bear and lion — be brought, having been kept from their food, that they might wholly consume their flesh with their bones.

23 And he commanded the beast-keepers to set the beasts upon them; they did as he commanded. They bound the holy martyrs limb to limb; and again, with cunning, they drove stakes through and pinned them.

24 But the beasts came roaring and were unleashed upon them; and when they reached the martyrs, they bowed down to them and paid them homage.

25 Roaring, they turned back upon their keepers; they terrified the keepers and pursued them until they brought them all the way to the king’s presence.

26 And there they killed seventy-five men from among the soldiers of the criminals.

27 With terror, the people crowded one upon another and many were crushed, until the king left his throne and fled. And with great difficulty they seized the beasts and brought them back to their lair.

> *Note on 3:23–26:* The beast-reversal is a hagiographic topos with the strongest precedent in Daniel 6:22 (the lions and Daniel); it recurs through Christian martyr-acts (e.g. *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, where Thecla is preserved by a lioness). The specific count of 75 soldiers killed is characteristic of Meqabyan’s love of numbered enumerations and has no obvious source.

28 Then came the two brothers of Abya, Sila, and Fentos; and loosing them from the bonds with which they were bound, they said to them: *“Come, let us flee, lest these criminals and waverers find us.”*

29 Those martyrs answered their brothers: *“After we have stood for martyrdom it is not fitting that we flee. If you yourselves are afraid, flee and go.”*

30 And those, their younger brothers, said: *“We also will stand with you before the king; if you die, we will die with you.”*

> *Note on 3:28–30:* These verses introduce **two further brothers**, making **five sons of Maqabis** in total. They are unnamed in the Amharic; the older three (Abya, Sila, Fentos) remain the named protagonists, but the company that goes to the furnace is all five. This expansion from three to five is a distinctive feature of the Ethiopian narrative without parallel in the LXX 2 Maccabees seven-sons account; see the scholarly apparatus, §6 (“The Maqabean Family of 1 Meqabyan”).

31 After this, the king on the gallery above the hall of his kingdom saw that those blessed men had been loosed and that all five brothers stood together. The officers who marshaled and punished the troops, having inquired and learned that they were brothers, reported it to the king; and the king, in his anger, roared like a wild boar in the wilderness.

32 And the king commanded that all five brothers together be seized and cast into prison until he should take counsel how to punish them. With unhewn timber he had them bound with grievous bonds, and they laid them in prison.

33 And King Ṣiruṣaydan said: *“These wandering young men have wearied me. How firm is the mind of these men! And the wickedness of their work is as the firmness of their strength; whenever I think they will turn, they make their minds the worse for it.*

34 *“I will repay them according to the measure of their wicked work. I will burn their flesh with fire until they are charred ash; and I will scatter the ash of their flesh on a mountain like dust, so that the wind may carry them away.”*

35 When he had said this, after three days he commanded that those holy ones be brought; and when those holy ones drew near, in a great pit-furnace he commanded that fire be kindled, and that they cast into it the things that should make the fire rage and the cauldron boil — pitch and tow, sea-foam and resin, and brimstone.

36 When the fire in the pit was blazing, the messengers came to the king saying: *“We have done what you commanded; send the man who is to be added to it.”*

37 And he commanded that they be received and cast into the fire-pit. The officers did as the king commanded; and as those holy ones entered into the fire, they gave their souls to God.

38 And angels received them — the very men who had cast them in seeing it. Their souls they took to where Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are — to Paradise where joy is found.

Chapter 3 — Confidence summary

Verse	Issue	Confidence
3:1–2	Heavenly voice naming the brothers	High
3:6	“Wonder-precious-as-jewels” (ዋጋው ድንቅ እንደ ሆነ ዕንቁም) — figurative epithet	High
3:23	“Drove stakes through and pinned them” (ካሰማ መትተው)	Medium — exact mode of torture is ambiguous
3:28–30	Identity of the “two brothers” (younger)	High — text is explicit
3:33	“Wandering young men” (የሳቱ ጐልማሶች) — could also be “deluded”	Medium
3:35	List of furnace accelerants (pitch, tow, sea-foam, resin, brimstone)	High

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Chapter 4

Introduction

Chapter 4 is the **king’s failed repentance and relapse**. The corpses of the five martyrs resist destruction: fire cannot burn them, the sea will not drown them (despite being weighted with millstones), beasts and birds will not touch them, and angels and birds shelter them for fourteen days until the king finally buries them. The martyrs then appear to Ṣiruṣaydan in his bedroom with drawn swords; he begs for mercy; they preach to him the doctrine of idols’ impotence; he confesses (v. 27) that *“the dust-dead in truth rise”* — the explicit resurrection-recognition moment. But vv. 29–32 show the king relapsing: he returns to his idols, leads many astray, and the catalog of pagan vice (child-sacrifice + sexual perversity) returns in force, echoing 1:14–15. The chapter closes (vv. 33–37) with a homiletic addendum on the duties of kings.

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1 When that criminal saw that they were dead, he commanded that their flesh be burned with fire until they became ash, and that the wind scatter them. But the fire was unable to burn even the hair of their heads from the body; and they took them out of the pit.

2 Again, from morning till evening, they kindled fire over them; it did not touch them. They said: *"Now then, come — let us cast their corpses into the sea."*

3 The king commanded as they had said, and they cast them into the sea. Heavy iron weights and great stones, and a millstone such as a donkey turns by the wheel — they added these and cast them with them; but the sea did not drown them. The Spirit of God was upon them, and they floated on the sea and did not sink into its deep; and in all the cunning that was contrived against them, they could not be destroyed.

4 And he said: *"Their death has wearied me more than their life. What shall I do but throw their corpses to the wild beasts, that they may eat them?"*

5 They did so; but the beasts and the carrion-birds did not touch their corpses. Carrion-birds and birds of the air covered them with their wings, that the sun might not burn them; and the corpses of those five martyrs remained for fourteen days.

6 When the people saw them, their bodies shone like the rays of the sun. And so that light might encompass them as a tent, angels surrounded their corpses.

7 He took counsel and found nothing he could do; after this, he dug into the earth and buried the corpses of the five martyrs.

8 And to that godless king as he lay sleeping on his bed by night, the five martyrs appeared in his presence, drawing their swords and standing in his face by night.

9 When he woke from his sleep, fearing — it seemed to him that they had entered his house by criminal means — he desired to flee from corner to corner of the house. It seemed to him that they had laid charges against him, and that they would kill him; and out of fear his knees trembled.

10 Therefore he said: *"Lords, what do you seek? What shall I do for you?"*

11 They answered: *"Are you not he who killed us by burning us in the fire, and who commanded us to be cast into the sea? Because we believed in God, he kept our bodies, and you were unable to destroy us. No one who believes in him perishes; therefore let praise and thanksgiving go up to God for his glory. We who believed in him were not put to shame in our affliction."*

12 *"I did not know,"* he said, *"that such a punishment would overtake me; for the evil I have done against you — what payment shall I give you?*

13 *"Now then — determine for me the payment I shall give you, that you may not take my body in death, nor lead me down to Sheol while I am yet living.*

14 *"For I have transgressed against you; and because the law of God your father is merciful, forgive me my sin."*

15 Those blessed martyrs answered him: *"We will repay you no evil for the evil you have done to us; the one who repays the wages is God — and our Creator God shall pay you your wages.*

16 *"But because of the smallness of your knowledge and the dullness of your mind, we have revealed ourselves to you, that you might see we are living; and we have prepared life for the one whom you thought you had killed.*

17 *"As for you and your idols' priests — you shall descend to Gehenna whence there is no way out forever.*

18 *"You who, being a man of spittle, have abandoned bowing down to God who created you, and bow down to idols you yourselves worship — woe to those idols and to you! You do not know whence you have come; are you not vapor that appears today and tomorrow is gone?"*

19 And the king answered: *"What do you command me to do, that I may do all that you desire?"*

20 *"What we teach you is for your own sake, that you may not enter into the gehenna of fire; not for ours.*

21 *"For your idols are gold and silver, stone and wood, made by human hands; they have neither soul, nor mind, nor knowledge.*

22 *"They neither kill nor save; they do no good and no evil; they do not humble and do not honor; they do not impoverish and do not enrich; they do not uproot and do not plant.*

23 *“But by the spirit of demons who love that not even one of those whose hearts are blind, like yours, should be saved, they deceive you. While you are the ones who made them, it seems to you that they have made you.*

24 *“The spirits of demons and of Satan dwell in them; and as you have desired, they answer you back, to drown you in the sea of Gehenna.*

25 *“As for you — leave this error of yours and worship the Lord our God; let this be the wage we receive in place of our death, that we may profit our souls.”*

26 And he stood astonished, marveling utterly. For all five had appeared to him with drawn swords, and he was afraid; therefore he bowed down to them.

27 *“Now then,”* he said, *“I have known that the dust-dead in truth rise up after their death; and I myself had little remaining before dying.”*

> *Note on 4:27:* This is the **explicit resurrection-recognition moment** of the narrative. The king’s confession — *“now I have known that the dust-dead in truth rise”* — is the doctrinal payoff that the homiletic ch. 8 will later systematize. Compare 2 Macc 7:14, where the fourth brother declares to Antiochus: *“It is well to have one’s hope from God to be raised up again by him”* — but here, in 1 Mq, the confession is uttered by the king himself, not the martyrs.

28 After this, the martyrs vanished from the king’s sight. And from that day onward, that Ṣiruṣaydan — utterly arrogant and proud — left off burning their corpses.

29 But after many days he became proud again in his idols, in the error of his mind, and was glad in them. It was not he alone who erred: until they should leave off following him, he led many like himself astray.

30 They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons; the desire of their mind which Satan their father had taught them — uproar and licentiousness, and that which God does not love — these they did. Fornication and licentiousness they wrought.

31 They married their own mothers; they defiled their sisters and aunts; this defiling work and everything that resembled it they did; their bodies they defiled. Satan had hardened the minds of those perverted people, and they said: *“We will not turn back.”*

> *Note on 4:30–31:* The catalog of child-sacrifice plus sexual perversity echoes 1:14–15 exactly — confirming this as the book’s signature pagan vice-list, structured around violating procreation (against children) and violating kinship (against the family bed). The catalog returns at length in chs. 12 and 17.

32 That Ṣiruṣaydan, ignorant of his Creator, was proud and arrogant, and put his trust in his idols.

33 *“How,”* he said, *“shall God give kingship to those who do not know him? It is because he tests them, that they may utterly return to him.”*

34 But if they had utterly returned, he would have loved them and preserved their kingdom; but since they refused, he will punish them in the writhing of Gehenna forever.

35 A king, then, in proportion to the greatness of his kingship, ought to fear the Lord God; and as a judge, in proportion to the greatness of his dominion, ought to submit himself in goodness to his Creator.

36 The great elders, the chiefs, and the officers also, in proportion to the greatness of their honor, ought to obey their Creator.

37 For he is Lord of heaven and earth, who created all his creation; he is the one who impoverishes and the one who enriches, who humbles and who honors; for above in heaven and below on earth, there is no other God besides him.

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Chapter 5

Introduction

Chapter 5 pivots into **sustained homiletic mode**. The brothers (now speaking as a collective prophetic voice) recite a catalogue of proud kings whom God humbled: Re'aytawi (a textually corrupt name — likely Pharaoh; see note on v. 1), Nimrod, and Nebuchadnezzar. Each is given a brief vignette before the speech turns directly to Ṣiruṣaydan with the warning that *he* shall be next. Verses 14–27 expand into a creation-confession (the same idiom seen in 2:5) plus a long Saul-Samuel-Agag pericope which dominates vv. 20–37. The chapter is a transition: the narrative recedes; for the remainder of 1 Meqabyan the book operates primarily as a *homily-with-occasional-narrative-glosses*, addressed to kings and princes, on the themes of resurrection, judgment, and the duties of authority.

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1 *Re'aytawi* boasted; but God, by a single mosquito-bite, made his body swell from foot to head; and by that little mosquito he died.

> *Note on 5:1:* The name ረዓይታዊ፡ (transliterated *Re'aytawi*) is a textual crux. The form does not match a known biblical figure; the narrative motif — boastful king killed by a mosquito-borne illness — fits the **Pharaoh of Exodus** in the rabbinic plague-tradition (cf. **Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Exodus 8:13–17** [Maher 1994 ed.], where the *kinnim* (gnats/mosquitoes) pierce the Egyptians' very flesh; **Shemot Rabbah 10:7**; and aggadot in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* §48 region) or, alternatively, **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** of 2 Macc 9:5–9 (consumed by worms after blasphemy). For the broader Geʿez demonological-and-plague tradition that may stand behind Meqabyan's compressed narrative, the most proximate source is the ***Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*** (Geʿez *Adambuch*; ed. Dillmann, *Das Christliche Adambuch des Morgenlandes*, Göttingen 1853; Trumpp's Munich 1880 Geʿez edition; Malan trans., *The Book of Adam and Eve*, London 1882). Confidence: **low**. Some translation traditions read "Pharaoh" here. Absent collation of the Geʿez of Frankfurt Rüppel II 7 or EMML 515, the proper-noun reading must be flagged as uncertain. The transliterated form is retained.

2 Again, Nimrod boasted, who because of the abundance of his violence had a bed of iron made for himself; and God destroyed him.

3 Again, Nebuchadnezzar boasted: *"There is no king besides me; I am the one who makes the sun rise upon the earth."* So he spoke from the abundance of his arrogance.

4 God separated him from humankind and sent him into the wilderness for seven years; he made his lot with the beasts of the wilderness and the birds of heaven, until he should know that the one who made him is God.

5 And when he knew, God restored him again to his kingdom. Who has boasted with arrogance against God his Creator, and the earth has not also become his ash?

6 Who has broken his law and his ordinance, and the earth has not swallowed him?

7 *"Ṣiruṣaydan, you also desire to boast against your Creator; he also shall destroy you because of your arrogance, as he did them, and bring you down to the grave.*

8 *"Furthermore, he shall bring you down to Sheol — the end of darkness, where there is gnashing of teeth and weeping; and after you have entered, to the great and deep pit from which there is no exit forever.*

9 *"For you yourself are tomorrow's mortal and shall perish, like the arrogant kings who were as you and have left this world's life."*

10 As for us, we say: *"You are a man and not God. The God who made earth and heaven also made you;*

11 *"and he it is who brings down the proud, and who honors the humble; who gives strength to the weary, and gives weariness to the strong.*

12 *"He kills the living, and again raises the dead who have been buried in the grave and have become dust.*

13 *“And he frees slaves from the bondage of sin into life.*

14 *“O King Ṣiruṣaydan! Why do you boast in your defiled idols, which are of no profit?*

15 *“For God it was who created the heavens, who founded the earth, who made the great sea, who made the sun and the moon, who established times and years.*

16 *“A man goes out to his tilling and remains plowing until dusk; and the stars of heaven endure standing fast by his word.*

17 *“He calls them all by their names; and there is no thing that comes to be without God knowing it.*

18 *“He commanded the angels of heaven that they should serve him and praise his honored name; and the angels are sent to all those who shall inherit life.*

19 *“The angel Raphael was sent to Tobit; and he saved Tobiah in the land of Raguel.*

> *Note on 5:19:* Direct cross-reference to **Tobit 5–6**. The Ethiopian text uses the form ራጉኤል (Raguel) for Raguel/Reuel of Ecbatana (Tobit’s father-in-law).

20 *“An angel was sent to Gideon, that he might make known to him how to destroy the Ammonites; and an angel was sent to the prophet Moses when Israel crossed the Red Sea.*

> *Note on 5:20:* “Ammonites” here translates ኤሎፍላውያን (*Eloflawayan*), which can also denote “Philistines”; in Meqabyan’s geography of the Pagan East the two are often blurred. The Gideon reference is to Judges 6.

21 *“For thus it is written: ‘God alone led them, and there was no other god with them.’ [Deut 32:12]*

22 *“He brought them to the harvest that is upon the earth.*

23 *“He fed them with the grain of the threshing-floor; he loved them utterly, and fed them with honey from the rock. [Deut 32:13]*

24 *“He made you king over the people; he gave you authority over the four kingdoms, that you might keep his people faithfully and do the will of God your Creator.*

> *Note on 5:24:* The “four kingdoms” motif here echoes **Daniel 2 and 7**. The brothers’ speech is positioning Ṣiruṣaydan within an apocalyptic schema of world-empires.

25 *“He set you above all in kingship, that you might love your Creator God in full.*

26 *“And you, as you have loved him and trusted him over all his people — you ought to love God your Creator utterly, and do God’s will, that your days upon all the earth may be multiplied, and that he may dwell with you,*

27 *“and stand up for you against your enemies, and seat you upon all your thrones, and shelter you with his wing.*

28 *“For if you should know — when God chose Saul from among the sons of Israel and made him king over his people Israel, while he was tending his father’s donkeys, and seated him on the throne with the prophet Samuel — so also has he chosen you.*

29 *“He separated him from his brothers and gave him a high lot, saying: ’From this day God makes you king over the people Israel, that you may keep his people;*

30 *“that you may kill and save, since God has appointed you over them; keep with good those who do good and with evil those who do evil.*

31 *“For though you scourge or save, that you may do his will, God has appointed you over all. Repay the doers of good with good; and the doers of evil with evil.*

32 *“You are the servant of God who rules all in heaven; in everything you have planned, submitting yourself before him — that he may do your will in everything you have asked — you also, in every time and every hour, do the will of God.*

33 *“For there is none who rules him; but he rules all.*

34 *“There is none who appoints him; but he appoints all.*

35 *“There is none who removes him; but he removes all.*

36 *“There is none who blames him; but he blames all.*

37 *“There is none who summons him; but he summons all. The authority of heaven and earth is his; there is none who escapes his hand; before him all is revealed, and there is nothing hidden from his eye.*

38 *“He sees all; but there is none who sees him. He hears the prayer of those who pray to him; he receives their prayer; for he created humankind in his image and in his likeness.*

39 *“And from his treasury that does not fail, he feeds all. For he is King who endures forever.”*

> *Note on 5:33–38:* The “none-who… but he…” litany is a stylized expansion of the divine attributes of Deut 32:39 (*“there is no god besides me”*). The five-fold structure (rules / appoints / removes / blames / summons) is unparalleled in the Geʿez biblical corpus and is one of the most rhetorically polished passages in 1 Mq.

Chapter 6

Introduction

Chapter 6 contains two distinct sections: the **heavenly-palace ekphrasis** (vv. 1–18), one of the most beautiful passages in 1 Mq, describing the dwelling of righteous kings (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Hezekiah); and the **Saul-Samuel-Amalek pericope** (vv. 20–38), expanded retelling of 1 Samuel 15. The latter functions as a worked example of God’s removal of unfaithful kings, applied directly to Ṣiruṣaydan as the lesson. The chapter cites 2 Sam 3:1 (“the house of David goes growing… the house of Saul goes ever more low”) at v. 36 as the proof-text. The gemstone description (vv. 3–10) parallels Tobit 13:16–17, Isaiah 54:11–12, and Rev 21:18–21, drawing on a common stock of heavenly-city imagery.

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1 *“For he truly makes king those kings who do his will; and the kings have written what is straight concerning him.*

2 *“Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, David and Solomon and Hezekiah, and all the holy kings whose dwelling is light — he shines upon their dwelling with light that cannot be searched out.*

3 *“Not as the hall that is upon earth; but the hall that is in heaven, utterly luminous. Its floor of gold and silver and pearl is pure.*

4 *“Its utterly shining appearance is removed from the mind of man. The hall of the kingdom of heaven shines with topaz and emerald, with chalcedony and aquamarine.*

5 *“It is a kingdom-hall shining utterly with precious gems beyond man’s imagining. It is the hall of the kingdom of heaven that he himself, God, has fashioned as he knows it. Its floor is of gold and silver, of sky-blue gem and green gem, of yellow gem, and the color of white silk — pure.*

6 *“Thus it is utterly beautiful — pure and luminous.*

7 *“It is built with righteousness and truth; and made with forgiveness and mercy.*

8 *“And from it flows water of life, whiter than the sun; there is a tent of light, fragranced with the perfume of Hermon.*

9 *“And around its house, sweet fruit of Paradise is planted, whose form and scent are surpassing. And there is a place of vine and olive — utterly beautiful, of pleasing fragrance.*

10 *“If a fleshly man should enter it, from the sweetness of its scent and the abundance of its joy his soul would be parted from his flesh.*

Note on 6:3–10: The heavenly-palace gemstone-list parallels **Tobit 13:16–17** (the New Jerusalem built with sapphire, emerald, and gold-of-Ophir), **Isaiah 54:11–12** (foundations of sapphires and pinnacles of agates), and **Revelation 21:18–21** (the twelve foundation-stones); the "water of life" matches **Rev 22:1**. The phrase *"his soul would be parted from his flesh"* at v. 10 is striking — Paradise's fragrance is so overwhelming that mortal flesh cannot bear it. Compare also the *Apocalypse of Paul* §22, where the apostle's heart "almost departs from him" on entering Paradise.

11 *"And in it those good kings who did the will of God are made glad; their work and their place are known in the kingdom of heaven, in the place of eternal life.*

12 *"As the glory of their kingship was on earth, so is it in heaven; just as they were honored on earth and bowed down to, so are they honored in heaven; and they are exalted. Even in this world they are made glad if they do good work.*

13 *"But wicked kings — who do not judge truly and rightly in the kingship and dominion God has given them, who have neglected the cry of the poor and of those who fast for lack of food, who do not save the oppressed and the foreigner and the orphan;*

14 *"who do not deliver the poor and the hungry from those who plunder them; who do not satisfy the hungry from their food; who do not give drink to the thirsty from their drink; who have not turned their ear to the cry of the poor —*

15 *"these shall be brought down to the dwelling of Sheol, which is the end of darkness; and as David said in his psalm — 'Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, and do not chastise me in your wrath' [Ps. 6:1] — when that great day God has prepared, and his wrath, comes upon them, according to the abundance of their renown so shall their hardship and shame abound.*

16 *"While kings and princes upon earth rule this world, they take those who have not kept his law.*

17 *"But in heaven there is God who rules all; the soul of all is in his hand; the life of all is in his mouth; he it is who gives honor to those who honor him; he is all-powerful; he rules all and loves those who love him.*

18 *"He, the King of heaven and earth, searches heart and kidneys; he gives the wages of his prayer to whoever has prayed to him with a pure heart.*

19 *"He shall destroy the arrogance of the mighty who do evil to widows and orphans.*

20 *"It was not by your strength that you took hold of this kingdom; it was not by your competence that you have sat upon this throne. But God, having permitted that you be tested as Saul was tested — Saul who, in his days, in ruling his people, despised the word of God and the word of Samuel, and did not kill the king of Amalek and his army — set you on the throne of the kingdom.*

21 *"For God had told the prophet Samuel: 'Go, say to Saul: They have grieved me by breaking the law and worshiping their idols, and by bowing to the idol in its sanctuaries, and in all their worthless defiled work — therefore, go to the country of Amalek; from man to beast, kings and their armies — all, destroy.'*

22 *"Therefore, when they had grieved God, he sent him to destroy them.*

23 *"But Saul saved their king; many cattle, and women and virgins; and from among the young men, the handsome ones — he saved. Therefore God said to the prophet Samuel: 'He has set my word at nothing; he has not obeyed my commandment; go and divide his kingship from him.*

24 *"In his place, anoint David the son of Jesse to reign over Israel.*

25 *"And in him [in Saul] let a demon that grips and casts him down be set to work.*

26 *"He whom I had given the kingdom that he might do my will has refused; and when he refused to do my will, I removed him from his honor. But you — go, tell him; say thus to him: As for God who set you king over his people Israel, and who seated you on the throne of the kingdom — do you thus despise him?*

27 *"You have not known the God who gave you such great honor and renown.'"*

28 *"And the prophet Samuel went to King Saul. He went in to him while he was seated at table, with Agag king of Amalek seated at his left.*

29 *“‘Why have you utterly despised God,’* he said, *‘who commanded you to destroy man and beast?’*

30 *“At that time, the king arose in fear from his throne, and laid hold of Samuel’s garment; but Samuel refused to turn back, and Samuel’s garment was rent.*

31 *“And Samuel said to Saul: ‘God has divided your kingdom.’*

32 *“Again Saul said to Samuel: ‘Honor me before the people, and make atonement for my sin before God, that he may forgive me.’ But Samuel refused to alter the word — for he feared the word of his Creator God, and did not fear a mortal king.*

33 *“Therefore, that he might not swallow what he had not chewed, he ran through Agag king of Amalek.”*

> *Note on 6:33:* The phrase **“that he might not swallow what he had not chewed”** (ያላመጠውጎ ሳይውጠው) is an Ethiopian idiomatic expression for executing someone before they can finish their bite — i.e., killing them at table mid-meal. It captures the swiftness of Samuel’s act in 1 Sam 15:33 (“Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal”).

34 *“And as for that godless one who had broken God’s word, an unclean spirit took him; it struck him in the head. For God does not stand in awe of a king who does iniquity; he is the King of kings who commands all.*

35 *“For he is Lord of all his creation, who removes the rule of every king and prince whom they do not fear; there is none who commands him.*

36 *“As it has been said: ‘The house of David goes growing ever more great; but the house of Saul goes ever more low’ [2 Sam 3:1] — so he destroyed the kingdom from Saul and his son.*

37 *“Because he was grieved, and because he had not destroyed the criminals who had grieved him by their evil work, God in his vengeance destroyed the house of Saul. For the one who does not avenge the enemy of God is himself the enemy of God.*

38 *“He who can avenge, and to whom authority has been given, but who does not avenge the sinner — the one who avenges not him who has no law of God — that man is in truth the enemy of God.”*

Chapter 7

Introduction

Chapter 7 is a **direct second-person address to the king** on the duties of royal office. The argumentation moves from the king’s createdness (vv. 1–5) to the duty of impartial judgment (vv. 6–14), the divine multiplication or shortening of days according to obedience (v. 15), the assize before God (vv. 16–24), and resurrection (vv. 25–27), closing with quotation of Deut 32:39 (vv. 29–30). The chapter cites three Pentateuchal proof-texts within its short compass: Sir 15:16 (“fire and water”), Deut 30:11–14 (“the word is near”), Deut 8:3 / Matt 4:4 (“man does not live by bread alone”). The literary density of quotation marks Chapter 7 as one of the most scripturally textured chapters in 1 Mq.

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1 *“You also, whether king or governor — what are you? Is it not God who created you?*

2 *“He brought you from non-existence into existence, that you might do his will, walk in his commandment, and fear his judgment. Just as you are angry with your slaves and rule over them, so also is there one who is angry with you and rules over you.*

3 *“As you strike sinners without mercy, so also is there God who strikes you, and who shall add to you a judgment which has no end forever.*

4 *“As you scourge whoever has not submitted to you and not brought a tribute-gift, why do you not bring a tribute-gift to God?*

5 *"As you wish to be feared, why do you not fear God your Creator? For it is he who created you and made you king over all his creation, that you might faithfully keep his people and his flock.*

6 *"Judge truly and rightly as God has appointed you; do not show favor to great or small. Whom shall you fear, except him? Keep his way and his commandment.*

7 *"As Moses commanded the sons of Israel: 'I have set before you fire and water; stretch out your hand to whichever you have chosen' [cf. Sir 15:16] — do not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*

8 *"So that you may hear his word and do his commandment, hear the word I tell you: that you might not say, 'Across the sea, across the deep, across the river — there is the word; who will bring it to me that I may see, that I may hear the word, that I may do God's commandment?'*

9 *"And again that you might not say: 'Who will go up to heaven for me and bring down for me that word of God, that I may hear and do it?' Behold, the word is near in your mouth; it is in your hand. [Deut 30:11–14]*

10 *"If you have not heard the book, you have not heard God your Creator; if you have not kept his word, you have not loved him; you have not done his commandment.*

11 *"And you, if you have not loved his commandment and not done the will of him who set you apart from all your kindred and honored you and made you great — you shall enter judgment forever.*

12 *"He made you head and chief over all the people, that you might remember the name of God your Creator; he gave you to rule his people truly and rightly.*

13 *"There are those whom you punish among the people who have transgressed against you; there is also one whom you forgive, having remembered God's way and inclining your heart in good and righteous judgment.*

14 *"When men plead before you, do not show partiality; the whole earth is your possession; do not take a bribe by which you might forgive the sinner and oppress the innocent.*

15 *"If you do his will, he will multiply your days upon the earth; but if you grieve him, he will diminish your days.*

16 *"Remember that you will rise from death, that whether good or evil — in all the work you have done — you shall stand before him to be examined.*

17 *"If you do good work, you shall dwell in the dwellings of the good kings, in houses of light. But if you do evil work, you shall dwell in the dwellings of the evil kings.*

18 *"God does not stand in awe of your kingly power. But you — when you have seen the splendor of your fearfulness, the trophies of your warriors, your hung-up war-armor; when you have seen your horses, the soldiers under your authority, those who blow trumpets and play harps before you —*

19 *"when you have seen all this, you exalt your understanding; you stiffen your neck; you forget him who has given you all this honor. When he says 'Stop,' are you not the one who must stop?*

20 *"He gave you the post you hold; and when you have utterly disregarded it, he gives your honor to another.*

21 *"For death will come on you suddenly, and at the resurrection judgment will be made, and every work of man will be examined; and there you shall be examined; he shall control you; he shall judge you.*

22 *"The kings of the earth have none to honor them in that day, since he is the Judge of truth; and at the time of judgment poor and rich shall stand together. The crowns in which the princes of the earth trust shall fall.*

23 *"Judgment is prepared; the soul trembles; the books are opened; the works of men are revealed; and there is none hidden.*

24 *"As when a woman comes to give birth, and the fetus within her womb has come to be born, the womb cannot keep it back — so shall the earth, at the time of the resurrection of the dead, return the trust deposited in it.*

> *Note on 7:24:* The image of earth-as-pregnant-womb returning its deposit at the resurrection is one of the most striking metaphors in 1 Mq. Closest parallel: **2 Baruch 50:2** ("the earth shall surely restore the dead which it now receives") and **4 Ezra 7:32** ("the earth shall give up

those who sleep in it"). The Ethiopian rendering personifies the earth as a mother in labor, intensifying the image.

25 *"Or — can the clouds keep back the rain so that they do not rain upon the place where God has commanded them? In the same way, since the word of God brought all from non-existence into existence and made it; and again, since the word of God has brought all into the grave — when the time of resurrection has come, it is not possible to make the dead not rise.*

26 *"Again, as he spoke to Moses: 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by the word that comes from the mouth of God' [Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4] — the word of God shall raise every man from the grave.*

27 *"Behold, it has been made known that the dead live by the word of God.*

28 *"Furthermore, concerning kings and princes and those who do his will, God said in Deuteronomy: 'Their day of accounting has come; at the time of judgment, when their foot stumbles, I will avenge them' [cf. Deut 32:35].*

29 *"Again, to those who do not know God's judgment, God said: 'Know that I am God; I kill, and I save.*

30 *"'I scourge, and I forgive; I lead down to Sheol and again I bring up to heaven; and there is none who escapes my hand.' [Deut 32:39]*

31 *"To kings and princes who have not kept his law, God said: 'Earthly kingship passes away; from morning till evening it passes. Keep my law and my ordinance, that you may enter into my eternal kingdom.*

32 *"For the calling of God is for honor or for shame; this he humbles, and this he honors.*

33 *"Whoever has not done his will, he removes; and whoever has done his will, he appoints.'"*

Chapter 8

Introduction

Chapter 8 is the **systematic exposition of resurrection** through natural parables — the most theologically polished chapter in 1 Mq. The argument proceeds through four images: (1) the vine and the tree (vv. 1–5), (2) the four elements gathered into the body (vv. 6–15), (3) day-and-night as figure of death-and-resurrection (vv. 16–21), and (4) the seed that must be undone to sprout (vv. 22–32), closing with the Lebanon-cedar / Hermon-dew motif (vv. 33–35). The seed-argument at vv. 22–32 closely parallels **1 Corinthians 15:36–38**: *"what you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and what you sow is not the body that will be, but a bare kernel."* The four-elements-gathered-into-body framework at vv. 6–15 has a parallel in **4 Ezra 7:32** (*"the earth shall give up those who sleep in it, and the dust those who dwell silently in it; and the chambers shall give up the souls that have been committed to them"*); the four-elements anthropology more broadly is a Hellenistic commonplace mediated to late-antique Christian thought via Stoic and Galenic sources. Whether Meqabyan drew directly on Paul, or both drew on a common Second-Temple stock of resurrection arguments, is the central question of the chapter's source-criticism. The latter is more likely; the resemblance is at the level of shared *topoi*, not verbal dependence.

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1 *"Now hear also concerning the resurrection of the dead; let me tell you. Trees are planted; they put forth branches; the vine puts forth tendrils; and they make wine from it — for God brings forth its fruit from non-existence.*

2 *"Just look: that tree you planted was once small. But today it has put forth ends, leaf, and fruit.*

3 *"And God waters its root from two breasts — from water and from earth.*

4 *"But its wood he feeds from wind and from sun; the root waters the leaf with water; the earth gives firmness to the wood.*

5 *"And the wind which God created gives fruit in their midst. So also is the resurrection of the dead.*

6 *“When the soul has been separated from the flesh, having taken its course, God said: ‘Gather souls from the four corners — from water and earth, from fire and wind.’*

7 *“The nature of earth stood firm in itself; it became ash. The nature of water stood firm in itself; it became dew.*

8 *“The nature of wind stood firm in itself; it became wind. The nature of fire stood firm in itself; it became fire that gives warmth.*

9 *“But the soul God created returned to the hand of its Creator; when he wills, he restores it, and dwells it where he wills.*

10 *“The souls of the righteous he keeps in a house of light; the souls of sinners he keeps in a house of darkness, until the time he wills to bring them forth.*

11 *“To the prophet Ezekiel he said: ‘Call from the four corners that they may be gathered and may become one body.’ [Ezek 37:9]*

12 *“And when he had spoken thus with one word, they were gathered from the four corners.*

13 *“And the nature of water brought dew; again, the nature of fire brought warmth.*

14 *“The nature of earth again brought earth; the nature of wind brought breath.*

15 *“And God brought the soul from its dwelling where he had set it; in one word they were gathered, and the resurrection took place.*

> *Note on 8:6–15:* The “four-elements gathered into resurrection” framework is a striking Ethiopian-Christian synthesis. The elements (earth, water, fire, wind) come from the four corners of the world; the soul, kept in God’s storehouse, returns as the fifth element. **Ezekiel 37** is the master-text; the explicit quotation in v. 11 makes the dependence visible. The most direct parallel for the “soul kept in God’s storehouse” image is **4 Ezra 7:32** (*“the earth shall give up those who sleep in it, and the dust those who dwell silently in it, and the chambers shall give up the souls that have been committed to them”*); the four-elements anthropology more broadly is a Hellenistic commonplace mediated to late-antique Christian thought via Stoic and Galenic sources. (A more specific patristic parallel would require collation against editions of Origen *De Principiis* and Gregory of Nyssa *On the Making of Man*, which has not been undertaken here.)

16 *“And in your own experience, I will show you another sign: day darkens; you sleep; the night brightens; and you rise from your sleep. While you slept, you were of death.*

17 *“And when you woke, that is a sign of the resurrection. But the night, all darkness — that is a sign of this world. The whole world sleeps in it, for the darkness of night has covered them.*

18 *“But the morning light, in which darkness is taken away, by which there is light in all the world, by which a man rises and goes out to his work — that is a sign of the resurrection of the dead.*

19 *“This renewal of the world and the resurrection of the dead is thus; for this world passes away in the likeness of this night.*

20 *“And David said: ‘He has set its sign in the sun.’ [Ps. 19:4] When the sun rises and shines, it is the sign of this world.*

21 *“As the sun shines on this world today, so when he comes — even God himself — he will shine for the renewed world; he will shine as the sun. For he has said: ‘I am the sun that does not set, the lantern that does not fail’ [cf. Isa 60:19–20]; for God himself is its light.*

22 *“Furthermore, he will raise up the dead in the blink of an eye. And I will bring you another sign — from the food from which you sow, and by which you live: be it a kernel of wheat, of barley, or of lentil — there is no fruit-of-labor a man sows in the earth which sprouts unless it has first been undone.*

23 *“As you see, when all human flesh undergoes its undoing, the fruit with its chaff is consumed in the earth.*

24 *“And when the fruit is consumed, sprouting as a seventh part of the seed, God gives the breath of life as he wills; the root sprouts within the earth; and it puts forth leaf upon the earth.*

25 *“Just look: until it has been undone, it cannot sprout. But after it sprouts, it puts forth many shoots.*

26 *“To that shoot which has grown, fruit is given by God; and the fruit is enwrapped by the chaff.*

27 *“See only how the seed you have sown has multiplied; the leaf, the stalk, the chaff, and the head — they cannot be counted for you.*

28 *“Do not be foolish; see how your seed has multiplied; and even so think about the resurrection of the dead, and how each shall be repaid according to his work.*

29 *“Hear yet again — that one seed does not transform into another; let me tell you. If you sow wheat, will you reap barley? If you sow cumin, will you reap flax?*

30 *“And from the kind of plants: if you plant a fig, will it grow into almond for you? If you plant a walnut, will it sprout into a vine for you?*

31 *“If you plant sweet fruit, will it sprout as bitter? If you plant bitter fruit, will it sprout as sweet?*

32 *“In just this way: if a sinner has died, can he become righteous at the resurrection? If a righteous person has died, can he become a sinner at the resurrection? Each shall be repaid as his work, according to the fruit of his work and the work of his hand; he shall not be judged for some other sin.*

33 *“The tree of Lebanon is planted; it puts forth tall and great branches; it withers and is shed unless the dew of Hermon falls upon it; its leaf does not flourish.*

34 *“The cedar also: if the winter rain has not fallen upon it, it is uprooted.*

35 *“In just this way: the dead do not rise unless the dew of life from God falls upon them.”*

> *Note on Chapter 8 as a whole:* This is the most theologically systematic exposition of resurrection in 1 Mq, and the chapter with the closest verbal parallels to canonical New Testament texts. The seed-argument at vv. 22–32 mirrors **1 Cor 15:36–38** closely; the day-night argument at vv. 16–19 has affinities with John 11:11 (“our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep”) and the early-Christian motif of death-as-sleep. Whether the parallels indicate direct dependence on Paul or shared Second-Temple resurrection-topoi is unresolved; the latter is more likely. The dew-of-Hermon image at vv. 33–35 draws on **Psalm 133:3**.

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Chapter 9

Introduction

Chapter 9 is **short and dense**. It opens (vv. 1–2) with a mercy-rain geography (Galaboh, Lebanon, Gilead, Elam), shifting at v. 3 into a catalog of apostates and heretics whom the resurrection’s mercy will not reach: idol-worshipers, root-chewers (sorcerers), and the peoples of Cyprus, Damascus, Athens, and Media. The chapter closes (vv. 7–10) with the archangel Michael’s trumpet at the resurrection and a quotation of **Isaiah 40:4** (mountains made low, valleys raised). The brevity and the toponym density make this a transitional chapter: the heretics-list compresses what the prophets handled at length.

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1 *“For the valleys of Galaboh and the mountains of Lebanon — if the rain of mercy from God does not fall upon them — do not put forth grass for the cattle and for the wild beasts.*

2 *“The mountains of Gilead and the valleys of Elam do not give greenness for the goats and sheep that graze, and for the wild creatures — for the wild ass and the wild ox, and for the gazelle.*

3 *“In the same way — apostates and heretics who have made their possession of denial and error from the beginning, if God’s dew of mercy has not come down upon them, the dead do not rise. The idol-worshipers, and root-chewers, those who contrive matters that they may quarrel — Cyprus and Damascus,*

4 *“the root-chewers, sorcerers and conjurers, and slayers of men,*

5 *“those who, having gone out from the law, lust greedily; who trust in their idol — the men of Athens and of Media, those who play lyres and timbrels and harps for their idols, who sing for them,*

6 *“who err with their idol, who pursue their lust by the work of their hand — these at the time of the resurrection, on the day of judgment, will not save themselves; these are they upon whom judgment shall fall.*

7 *“You foolish one, you of empty mind — does it seem to you that the dead do not rise?*

8 *“At the resurrection of the dead, when the trumpet is blown by the mouth of the archangel — by holy Michael — you shall not remain in your slumber. Therefore do not think this.*

9 *“Mountains and hills shall be made low; rivers and depths shall be made even; a way prepared shall come to be. [Isa 40:4]*

10 *“And for all flesh there shall be resurrection.”*

> *Note on Chapter 9:* Several toponyms have uncertain identification. ጌላቡሄ (v. 1, “Galaboh”) is not a standard biblical place; possibly Gilboa, possibly a corrupted form of Gilead (since Gilead is mentioned separately in v. 2, the former is more probable). ቆጵሮስ (Cyprus) and ዲማስ (Damascus) at v. 3, ኣቴና (Athens) and ሜዶን (Media) at v. 5, are unambiguous and reflect a Hellenistic-era horizon transposed into the notional “pre-Christ” pagan setting. The “root-chewers” (ሥር የሚሞሱ) at vv. 3–4 are sorcerers who use root-magic; the practice is condemned at length in 1 Enoch 7–8 (the fallen Watchers teaching pharmakeia) and in *Jubilees* 10. The archangel Michael’s trumpet (v. 8) is a standard Ethiopian apocalyptic figure, paralleling 1 Thess 4:16 and the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

Chapter 10

Introduction

A short chapter (8 verses) giving the **argument-from-ancestral-burial** for the resurrection. The patriarchs — Adam, Abel, Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron — sought to be buried with their kin precisely so that, at the resurrection, they would rise *with their kin* and not be reckoned with the idol-worshipers and the heathen. This is a distinctively Ethiopian theological reading of the patriarchal-burial passages (Gen 23, Gen 49:29–32, Gen 50:25, Heb 11:22): it makes burial-location a function of eschatological identity. The chapter ends (vv. 5–8) returning to the seed-parable of ch. 8.

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1 *“If it were not so — why is it that the fathers of old, beginning from Adam and from Abel and Seth, from Noah and Shem, from Abraham and Isaac, from Jacob and Joseph, from Moses and Aaron — did not desire to be buried outside the graves of their fathers?*

2 *“Was it not that at the resurrection they might rise together with their kin? That their bones should not be reckoned with the bones of the wicked who worship idols — with idol-worshipers and the heathen?*

3 *“But as for you — when many thousand upon thousand are buried in a single grave and their bones decay, saying, ‘How shall the dead rise after they are dead?’ — do not let your mind be deluded.*

4 *“When you look into a grave and no handful of earth is found, you say in your mind’s folly: ‘How shall the dead rise?’*

5 *“Will you say the seed you have sown does not sprout? Even the seed you have sown sprouts.*

6 *“In the same way, the souls God has sown — they shall rise speedily. Since he has brought man from non-existence into existence by his truth, he does not delay raising them with his life-giving word.*

7 *“Furthermore, he returns him from existence into death; furthermore, he returns him from death into existence.*

8 *“God is able to give life and to raise up.”*

> *Note on 10:1:* The patriarchal-burial sequence is composite, drawing on Gen 23 (the cave of Machpelah for Abraham and Sarah), Gen 49:29–32 (Jacob’s burial-instructions), Gen 50:25 / Ex 13:19 / Josh 24:32 (Joseph’s bones brought up from Egypt), and Heb 11:22. The inclusion of **Adam and Abel** in the list reflects extra-canonical traditions: in the *Book of the Cave of Treasures* (a key text for the Ethiopian Church), Adam is buried in the cave of treasures, Abel beside him, and the patriarchs in succession.

Chapter 11

Introduction

A short chapter pivoting to **prophetic indictment**: Tyre and Sidon are explicitly named together (v. 1) for the first time in the book. This is a key datum for the **Ṣiruṣaydan** = **Tyre** + **Sidon etymology** (proposed by **Dillmann** in the *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae* and endorsed by **Horovitz 1905** p. 195 fn. 3: *“So schon Dillmann l.c.”*): the king-name of chs. 1–4 (ጸሩጻይዳን) appears to be a composite of the Geʿez forms for these two Phoenician cities (ጢሮስ + ሲዶና), echoing the Tyre-and-Sidon coinage of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The chapter closes (vv. 6–8) with a direct quotation of Deuteronomy 32:32–33 (the Song of Moses on the “vineyard of Sodom”). See SOURCES.md §1.1, §1.3 for citation details.

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1 Hermon and her walls have fallen; for God has repaid them according to their wickedness and the work their hands have done. At that time, those who worship idols in Zebulun and Edom shall be brought low; for they have done so from their childhood and have not left it even to old age. Therefore Tyre and Sidon shall weep, since judgment is at hand against them for their idol and their wickedness.

2 And because they have wrought licentiousness and defilement and fornication, and worshiped idols, God shall avenge himself against them. And the daughters of Judah shall be brought low; for they have not stood firm in the commandment of God their Creator.

3 And likewise, at the resurrection, the shame of Jerusalem shall be revealed; for she did not walk in the law and judgment of God; but she lived in delight and in killing the righteous.

4 At that time, God will search her by the light of his wisdom; he will avenge himself for all she did in the days of her childhood, in the days of her youth — for all the wickedness she did not leave even to her old age.

5 Since they have lived in their custom and refused God’s commandment, since at the resurrection he shall avenge himself against them — like her former fathers, she shall enter the grave and become dust.

6 For Moses spoke concerning them: *“Their vineyard is like the vineyard of Sodom.*

7 *“Their tendril is from Gomorrah; their cluster is a cluster of gall; their fruit is bitter.*

8 *“Their wine is the poison of serpents; even the poison of the deadly viper.”* [Deut 32:32–33]

> *Note on Chapter 11 (esp. v. 1):* The pairing **“ጢሮስና ሲዶና”** — *“Tyre and Sidon”* — is a key corroborating datum for the proposed etymology of the king-name ጸሩጻይዳን (Ṣiruṣaydan) as **Tyre** + **Sidon** (proposed by Dillmann in the *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae*, endorsed by Horovitz 1905 p. 195). The text explicitly names the twin Phoenician cities and brings them into the apostate-cities-of-Israel rhetoric. The connection to King Ṣiruṣaydan in chs. 1–4 is thereby completed: the eponymous tyrant is the personification of Tyre-and-Sidon as the archetypal

pagan-east power. The Deut 32 quotation at vv. 6–8 confirms the Pentateuchal idiom in which the indictment is framed.

Chapter 12

Introduction

Chapter 12 is the **longest sustained Jerusalem-apostrophe-as-Sodom indictment** in 1 Mq. The whole chapter is a divine speech addressed to "the daughter of Jerusalem" — anticipating Lamentations and the prophetic tradition (Isa 1:9–10; Jer 23:14; Ezek 16) of denouncing Jerusalem by means of the Sodom-comparison. The chapter contains one of the clearest New Testament resonances in the book (v. 22, "*the worm does not sleep and the fire is not quenched*" = Isa 66:24 / Mark 9:48); it also contains the most explicit covenant-violation language (vv. 24–27), the catalog of pagan worship she has adopted (vv. 18–22: sacrifice, drink-offering, incense, child-sacrifice), and the chapter-closing assignment of righteous-eat-while-sinners-weep (vv. 41–44) which serves as a transition to the eschatological material of chs. 13ff.

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1 Daughter of Jerusalem! This is your shame which has been written by the prophet. Daughter of Jerusalem! Your work and your iniquity are like the work and iniquity of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

2 Your shame is as Gomorrah's, as Sodom's; the place of their vineyard was planted in lust and arrogance.

3 From fornication and arrogance, from violence and iniquity, from plunder and shedding of blood, from forgetting the name of God their Creator — except these, no rain of humility and mercy came down on them.

4 Except for their evil works and their idol, they have not known their Creator God; they are glad in the work of their hand; they fornicate with cattle and with man.

5 Their eyes have been blinded that they may not see; their ears have been deafened that they may not hear, that they may not do the will of God and what he loves. By their work they do not know God; they are the vineyard of Sodom; their offspring is also the tendril of Gomorrah, that bears no sweet fruit.

6 For from the day they were planted they have been planted with a curse, and their plantation was in the time of destruction; when they have pressed their vine, it becomes deadly poison.

7 For the planting of their vine has drunk Sheol's water; their tendril has been hardened in the hot wind; their vine-tendril has no goodness for all time.

8 When it has borne fruit and is pressed, it has become for scourge and for destruction; it hardens the minds of those who drink it; it makes them perverse and far from God.

9 And by their evil work they live; he makes them a dwelling for the Devil. The Sodomic tendril begins to consume; she climbs up to the mountains and to the trees.

10 And the idol of those around her she covers with her shade; to demons who know neither evil nor good, she sacrifices her daughters and her sons.

11 And they pour out innocent blood; from Sodomic wine they have made an eternal pouring, and to the idol they pour out.

12 She honors and worships Dagon whom the Ammonites worship.

13 That she may sacrifice to them and do their will: from her childhood till her youth, then from her old age till the day of her death — always, from the cattle of her flock the fattened ones she sacrifices to them; rejoicing in the demons' drink and folly which they have taught her, that she may not know God her Creator who has fed her and cared for her always.

14 Furthermore — *"At the time of the resurrection I shall avenge myself against her; for she did not turn back to my law, did not endure faithfully in my commandment; her time shall be unto eternity.*

15 *"If her gods are truly her creators, then when I was angry with her in my wrath, when I separated from her those friends who fornicate with her, let them rise up and run to Gehenna and save her.*

16 *"As she rendered insult and shame against my house and against the vessels of my sanctuary, so among all I have made her a wretched outcast.*

17 *"Behold, this is the people of God; it is the house of God, Creator of Israel; it is the dwelling-place of the name of the Most High. Yet though it is called 'set apart of the set apart' and 'city of the king of glory — Jerusalem' — she has grieved my name by which she was named.*

18 *"As she was my servant and I her Lord, she boasts in me; but she points the finger at me like a criminal, and is not one who fears me as her Lord and does my will.*

19 *"She has become a stumbling-block to lead astray; she submits to other gods who do not feed her or rear her or clothe her, instead of those who do.*

20 *"She sacrifices to them; she eats their sacrifice; she pours out the drink-offering for them; she drinks the drink-offering; she burns incense for them; she breathes the fragrance of the incense for them; they command her; she submits to them.*

21 *"Again she sacrifices her sons and her daughters to them; she shouts for joy at her love for them, and is glad in the work of her hand and in the speech of her lips.*

22 *"On the day of judgment, woe to her! Woe to the gods she loves and embraces! Together with them she shall descend to that uttermost Sheol where the worm does not sleep and the fire is not quenched."*

> *Note on 12:22:* The phrase **"the worm does not sleep and the fire is not quenched"** is a direct citation of **Isaiah 66:24** / **Mark 9:48** (*"their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched"*). This is one of the clearest New Testament resonances in 1 Mq; the use of the Mark form (with "is not quenched") suggests Christian-era composition, though it could also be a Geʿez rendering of the Septuagintal Isaiah.

23 *"Wretched daughter of Jerusalem, woe to you — for you have forsaken me who created you and have worshiped other gods.*

24 *"And I shall bring upon you the recompense of your work; you have grieved me, you have despised my word, you have not made your work right; according to your provocation I shall avenge myself.*

25 *"For you have grieved my word; in my commandment which I commanded you that you might keep, that I might dwell with you, that I might save you from all who attack you — in my covenant in which I swore with you — you have not stood firm. Therefore I disregard you; I shall not save you speedily.*

26 *"All this you have not kept; and I have disregarded you. In the time of judgment also I shall avenge myself against you. Am I not the one who created you? You have not kept my word and my commandment; I had honored you, that you might be of my people.*

27 *"Sodom and Gomorrah were separated; you also have separated yourself from me.*

28 *"I destroyed them in my wrath; you are of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah whom I destroyed; by going to a young man's wife, by lying with women, by lusting against the law with cattle and with man, those whom I created have grieved me; therefore the calling of their name have I destroyed from the earth, that they should not live in their pleasure.*

29 *"From the least to the greatest, there is no fearing of God before them; they assist him [Satan] in every evil work; not one of them rebukes another to leave off doing that work; for their work is evil; they are sated with iniquity and transgression.*

30 *"All evil work — plunder and arrogance, greed — is prepared in their thought.*

31 *"Therefore God disregarded them; he overturned their cities; some he burned with fire to their foundations; they perished utterly forever, and not one of them remained.*

32 *“For they are bound in sin; until the great day of judgment when the eternal judgment shall be given, they shall await; in their evil work they have grieved me, and I shall not have mercy on them and shall not forgive them.*

33 *“I also disregarded them. In the same way, you, wretched daughter of Jerusalem — at the time of judgment, like them, you shall be bound. For all your work is plunder and sin, lust and greed, and speaking lies; and since it is the path of error and slipping which I do not love, when I take hold of you in my anger you shall find no excuse.*

34 *“I had made you for honor; but you made yourself for shame. I had made you for myself; but you became for another.*

35 *“I had betrothed you for holiness; but you became for the Devil; and I shall avenge myself against you as is the wickedness of your work.*

36 *“Because you have not heard all my word, because when I loved you, you did not keep the commandment I commanded you — for I am God who created you — I shall multiply heavy vengeance against you; and against all sinners like you I shall be angry; according to their wickedness I shall repay them on the day of judgment.*

37 *“You have not kept my word; and you have disregarded my judgment; together with them I shall punish you.*

38 *“You who have no fearing of God in your hearts — Sodom and Gomorrah — woe to you!*

39 *“In the fire of Gehenna, woe also to your sister who shall be judged with you in unity — the daughter of Jerusalem; for to Gehenna prepared with no exit forever, you shall descend together; and woe to all who do your work.*

40 *“For you have not kept my word and my commandment; and you who have not kept my word and my commandment — you and she — at the time of judgment shall descend together to Sheol.*

41 *“But the righteous who have kept my word and my commandment shall eat what the sinners fattened; what the wicked plundered, the good shall divide as God has commanded; and the righteous and the good shall rejoice; they shall be glad.*

42 *“But sinners and transgressors shall weep; for all the wickedness they did, going out from my commandment, they shall be in grief.*

43 *“Whoever keeps my word and walks in my commandment — he is the one who shall receive my blessing, and shall be honored before me.*

44 *“Whoever keeps my word and does my commandment shall eat the blessing of the earth; he shall enter to where the good and upright kings have gone, and there he shall dwell.”*

Chapter 12 — Confidence summary

Verse	Issue	Confidence
12:4, 12:28	“fornicate with cattle and with man” — bestiality + same-sex	High lexically; framing as part of the Sodom-vice-list is clear
12:12	Dagon (ዳጎን) as object of worship	High — direct ID with Philistine deity 1 Sam 5
12:17	“Set apart of the set apart” — superlative form	High — standard Geʿez idiom for “holy of holies”
12:22	Mark 9:48 / Isa 66:24 quotation	High
12:27–28	“Sodom and Gomorrah… you are of their people”	High — explicit equation

Verse	Issue	Confidence
12:35	Bridal imagery (“I had betrothed you for holiness”)	High — Hosea-influenced idiom

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Chapter 13

Introduction

Chapter 13 is the **eschatological pivot** of the book. It contains the explicit **Lucifer-fall passage** (vv. 12–13, citing Isa 14:12–14), an apocalyptic toponym-list of New-Testament-era places (Capernaum, Samaria, Galilee, Syria, Damascus, Cyprus, Achaia), the cosmic-signs sequence from Mark 13 / Matthew 24 (v. 6), and a Pauline 1 Corinthians 15 echo at v. 7 (*“the last enemy, death, he shall abolish”*). The chapter introduces a “son of destruction” (የጥፋት ልጅ) figure who is the *antichristos* — a coming arrogant ruler whom God has permitted as an instrument of his wrath. The chapter closes with a retrospective of Israel’s wilderness sins (Horeb, Meribah, Sinai, the Canaan spy-mission) and a Genesis 6:5 / Sirach-style maxim about the ashen heart of Adam’s children. This chapter is one of the strongest pieces of internal evidence for **post-Christ composition or interpolation** in 1 Mq: the Mark 13 citation and the 1 Cor 15 echo are not easily explained by Septuagintal source alone.

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1 *“In the time when I take hold of them in my wrath they shall be humbled; they shall be scourged. To Tyre and Sidon who today exalt themselves, and to all the districts of the land of Judah — woe to them!*

2 *“For God said: ‘A son of destruction, arrogant and proud, the enemy of righteousness — one who stiffens his neck, who boasts and does not know his Creator — shall come forth from among them; and I, God who rules all, have made him the likeness of my wrath, that I may show forth my power against him.’*

3 *“This Capernaum, Samaria and Galilee, Syria and Damascus, Cyprus and Achaia, and all the heathen of the district of the Jordan — these are a people who have stiffened their necks, who walk in their custom, whom the shadow of death and darkness has covered; for the Devil has covered their mind, and they submit to that arrogant one; they do not turn back to the fear of God.*

> *Note on 13:3:* The toponyms here are **post-Hellenistic / early Roman**: Capernaum (a NT-era Galilean settlement), Achaia (Roman province name for Greece), Cyprus (under Roman rule from 58 BCE) — none of these as named places would be at home in a pre-Hellenistic Pentateuchal setting. This is one of the strongest pieces of internal dating evidence in 1 Mq.

4 *“To those who submit to the impure, and to those who sacrifice in their name — woe to them at that time! For they have denied God their Creator; they are like beasts without understanding. For that godless son of destruction in every place will set up his image. In the work of his hand and the desire of his heart, in plunder and every sin, in deceit and transgression, in plunder and every fornication a man works, in lying speech — he is glad.*

5 *“Since it has been counted before God that he should do this, it is made known in his time that he shall do so.*

6 *“The sun shall darken; the moon shall become blood; the stars shall fall from heaven; according to the work of the hands of those who dwell in it, that earth and all that is in it may pass away by the sign which shall come in the latter days. All his work shall perish;*

> *Note on 13:6:* The triple cosmic-signs sequence — *“sun shall darken; the moon shall become blood; the stars shall fall from heaven”* — is a direct citation of **Mark 13:24–25 / Matthew 24:29**,

themselves drawn from Joel 2:31 (LXX 3:4) and Isa 13:10 / 34:4. The use of the New Testament form (with stars *"falling"* rather than being *"darkened"*) suggests Christian-era composition.

7 *"For God has glory over the creation he created; in one hour, as he wills, he has done it; and the last enemy, death, he shall abolish.*

Note on 13:7: The phrase *"the last enemy, death, he shall abolish"* is a direct echo of **1 Corinthians 15:26** (*"the last enemy to be destroyed is death"*). This is one of the clearest verbal parallels with the Pauline corpus in 1 Mq.

8 *"For God who rules all has said, 'I will avenge'; and after that there is no rule [for the enemy].*

9 *"And in the day when he is taken hold of in my wrath, he shall descend to the scourging and judgment that have been kept ready for him; he shall draw with him into destruction, affliction, and denial all those who are with him. For I am the one who brings forth from and brings into the judgment of Gehenna.*

10 *"Let not the mighty boast in his strength; for he gives firmness and strength to weary men; and again, to mighty and strong men he gives weariness.*

11 *"He is God who rules; and against those who do violence — judging from the hand of those who oppress them, he saves; he repays the vengeance of widows and orphans.*

12 *"To you, woman, who boast and stiffen your neck, woe to you. It seems to you that I shall not take hold of you in my wrath and avenge myself against you. As it was said in this manner: 'How is the dawn-star, which rises in the morning, fallen from heaven?*

13 *"In his arrogance and his pride: I will spread my throne in the heavens and above the stars; I will be like the Most High.' [Isa 14:12–14]*

Note on 13:12–13: The dawn-star fall passage is an explicit citation of **Isaiah 14:12–14**. 1 Mq reads this passage, in standard Christian-Ethiopian interpretation, as a description of Satan's primordial fall — v. 15 immediately makes Lucifer the chief of fallen angels, and v. 17 makes him the leader of all those who descend to Gehenna. The form የአጥቢያ ኮከብ (*the dawn-star*) is the Geʿez rendering of LXX *Ἑωσφόρος* / Vulgate *Lucifer*.

14 *"So you also have dared in your arrogance to speak; and you have not remembered God who created you and made you with his hand. By the firmness of your mind to descend to Gehenna — why have you exalted yourself?*

15 *"You have been humbled with all angels who are like you in your arrogance; for they in lowliness of heart praise their Creator, and do not go out from his commandment; for they have known that he is the one who created them and made them; they have kept their mind that they should not go out from his commandment or transgress.*

16 *"But you in the arrogance of your mind have done evil; you have become separated from your companions and humbled. For sinners and those of your nature who, like you, deny — those godless ones in whose dwelling is sin and iniquity, deceit and plunder — you are their keeper; you teach them wickedness; they go in your desire and your commandment.*

17 *"You and those whom you have led astray by your cunning shall descend together to Gehenna — woe to you.*

18 *"You children of God led astray by that misleading criminal — woe to you! For he and his demons taught you, and like him you have erred. To the scourging from which there is no exit forever, you shall descend together.*

19 *"At the beginning, while my servant Moses was yet alive — at Horeb and at the water of Meribah, at Mount Sinai and at Amalek — you grieved him.*

20 *"Again, when you sent spies to Canaan, and they told you: 'The way is far; their walls reach to heaven; their fortress is strong; warriors dwell there' — in your anger, you rebelled against God's word, that you might return to the land of Egypt where you did the work of hardship.*

21 *“You did not remember God who saved you from affliction, who in Egypt did great wonders and led you by the hand of his angel. By day a cloud shielded you that the sun might not burn you; and a pillar of fire shone by night so that your foot might not stumble in darkness.*

22 *“When his army and Pharaoh terrified you, you cried out utterly to Moses; and Moses cried out utterly to God; and he kept you by his angel that you should not meet Pharaoh’s army.*

23 *“But them he turned back into affliction. ‘God alone led them, and there was no other god with them’ [Deut 32:12]. Their enemies he buried at one time in the sea; he left no fugitive of them.*

24 *“And Israel he brought across through the midst of the sea on foot; from the Egyptians no evil reached them. He brought them to Mount Sinai; and there for forty years he fed them with manna.*

25 *“For the sons of Israel always grieve God; though he had done so much good for them, they neglected to worship God.*

26 *“From their childhood till they grew old they kept wickedness in their mind. For the mouth of God in the book of the generations of the fathers spoke thus: ’The mind of the sons of Adam is ash; all their work is running to plunder and to wickedness; among them there is none who loves a straight work — except gathering with violence the wealth of others, swearing falsely, killing one’s neighbor, plundering and stealing.*

27 *“All in their lifetime go to this wickedness.’”* And the sons of Israel who have broken God’s commandment, from the beginning to the end utterly grieved God.

> *Note on 13:26:* The citation **“the book of the generations of the fathers”** (በአበው የትውልድ መጽሐፍ) introduces a maxim about the ash-like heart of Adam’s children. The closest canonical parallel is **Genesis 6:5** / **8:21** (*“every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”*), but the Meqabyan version is expanded and reads more like **Sirach 17:31–32** or **Wisdom of Solomon 2** in tone. The “book of the generations” formula may also point to *Jubilees*, which the Ethiopian Church canonizes.

Chapter 14

Introduction

Chapter 14 retells the **Flood–Noah covenant** (vv. 1–3), summarizes the **Decalogue** in five-commandment form (vv. 7–9), narrates the **golden-calf at Horeb** (vv. 11–18) with Moses’s striking exchange with Joshua about *“the sound of unfermented wine”* (v. 15) — a witty Geʿez expansion of Ex. 32:18 — and contains one of the clearest **1 Corinthians 2:9 echoes** in 1 Mq (v. 20: *“what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, what has not entered the mind of man, God has prepared…”*).

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1 And God baptized the earth with the water of the flood when he had punished the former peoples for the sin of the sons of Cain; he cleansed it of all the sin of the sons of Cain.

2 *“I am grieved that I have created man,”* he said, and destroyed all the transgressors. Except for eight people he left none; all he destroyed. After this he multiplied them; he filled the earth; and they divided the inheritance of their father Adam.

3 But Noah made a covenant with God — that God would not destroy the earth again with the water of destruction; and the children of Noah, that they should not eat that which has died or rotted, should not worship any other gods besides God who created them, that he should be their God, that he should not destroy them once again in vain, that he should not withhold from them the rains of summer-rain and the latter-rain, that he should give in their seasons food for cattle and for men, that he should give them grass and grain-fruit and plant — that they should make their work pleasing to God in all he loves — they made a covenant.

4 After he had given them this ordinance, the sons of Israel grieved God by their wickedness; they did not walk as their fathers — as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob — who did not break the law of God their Creator.

5 From the least to the greatest, those sons of Israel who did not keep the law of God were perverted in their work.

6 Their priests and their chiefs and their scribes — all of them — break God's law.

7 They did not stand firm in the law and ordinance of God which Moses, in the book of the law, commanded them, saying: *"Love God your Creator with all your heart and all your soul.*

8 *"Love your neighbor as yourself. Do not worship other gods. Do not go to a young man's wife. Do not kill. Do not steal.*

9 *"Do not bear false witness. Do not desire your neighbor's possessions — anything your brother has bought, his donkey or his ox."*

> *Note on 14:7–9:* A simplified five-commandment summary of the Decalogue (Deut 5 / Ex 20), conflating the ethical commandments and omitting the first three. The form (love-God-and-neighbor as preface, followed by the prohibitions) approximates the **Synoptic Great Commandment** structure (Mark 12:29–31; Matt 22:37–40), suggesting Christian-era reframing.

10 But after he had commanded them all this, those wicked sons of Israel turn again to sin and denial, to transgression and plunder, to the young man's wife and to stealing, to lying and to worshiping idols.

11 The sons of Israel grieved God at Horeb by making the idol of a calf that goes out to grass; *"Behold, these are our gods who brought us out of Egypt,"* they said, and bowed down.

12 They rejoiced in the work of their hand; they ate, drank, were filled, and rose up to dance.

13 Therefore God said to him: *"Your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, have sinned and gone astray; they have made the image of a calf and bowed down to the idol."* And Moses came down from Mount Sinai in anger.

14 Moses came down, raging against his people, with his attendant Joshua; and when Joshua heard, he said: *"Behold, I hear the sound of warriors in the camp of Israel."*

15 And Moses said to Joshua: *"It is not the sound of warriors but the sound of unfermented wine."* Coming down, he broke their image; he ground it utterly to dust; and the sons of Israel he made drink in the water near the mountain. [cf. Ex 32:17–20]

> *Note on 14:15:* The Geʿez expansion of Ex 32:18 — Moses retorting that what Joshua hears is *not* the sound of warriors but **"the sound of unfermented wine"** (ያልፈላ የወይን ጠጅ) — is one of the most stylish details in 1 Mq. The Hebrew of Ex 32:18 has Moses saying *"It is not the voice of crying for mastery… but the sound of singing"* (תוּנַּע לוֹק); the Geʿez retains the rhythmic-three structure but substitutes the specific image of *unfermented wine*, evoking the riotous drunkenness of the calf-feast.

16 After this, because they had done evil before God, he commanded the Levites to slay one another.

17 Knowing that to contend with God exceeds killing oneself and one's kin and fathers, they did as he commanded.

18 Therefore Moses said to them: *"Because you have grieved God who fed you and cared for you and brought you out of the house of subjection — God who gave you the inheritance he swore to your fathers, to give to them and to their children after them — in your own hand you have made God pleased."*

19 Yet from that point onward they go to sin and evil; they did not leave off grieving God.

20 From their childhood through their youth to their old age — they are not like their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who pleased God by their good works; that God should give them what is upon the earth and what in heaven he has prepared for those who love him — the milk-and-honey-flowing land of inheritance, and in the world to come the Paradise of joy prepared for the righteous — *what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, what has not entered the mind of man* — which God has prepared for

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and for those who love him and please him in their lifetime as their fathers did.

> *Note on 14:20:* The phrase **“what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, what has not entered the mind of man”** is a direct citation of **1 Corinthians 2:9** (itself drawing on Isa 64:4 / 65:17). 1 Cor 2:9 was a beloved patristic prooftext for the heavenly reward; its appearance here is one of the clearest pieces of evidence for Christian-era composition of this material.

21 But the children of those, deniers and wicked, living in the desire of their mind, have not heard the word of God who fed them and cared for them and kept them from their childhood.

22 They did not remember God who brought them out of the land of Egypt and saved them from brick-making and bitter subjection.

23 But they grieved him utterly; therefore he raised against them the heathen who were around them; and they, rising in enmity, made them tributary as they pleased.

Chapter 15

Introduction

Chapter 15 introduces a **second Maqabean warrior trio**, distinct from the five sons of Maqabis in chs. 2–4. Three brothers — **Mebkyus, Maqabis, and Yehuda** (መብክዩስ፡ መቃቢስ፡ ይሁዳ) — are given strength by God to save Israel from the Midianite king **Akrandyos** (አክራንድዮስ), who crosses the Jordan with the armies of Syria, Cilicia, and Damascus, demanding tribute. The brothers go alone to his table-camp; Mebkyus beheads the king mid-meal (the same “swallow-what-was-not-chewed” idiom as 6:33 with Samuel and Agag), Yehuda and Maqabis strike his lieutenants, and the army defeats itself in panic. Israel takes the plunder. This is the **second martial deliverance** in 1 Meqabyan and its narrative content is the closest 1 Mq comes to the Hasmonean material of LXX 1 Maccabees (Judas + brothers + foreign king + battle by the Jordan). The name **Yehuda** is identical with Judas Maccabeus; the parallel with 1 Macc 3 (Judas’s victories) is suggestive.

> *Editorial note:* Horovitz 1905 (p. 195) places three brothers named **Makabjos, Maqäbjos, and Jehuda** at the start of the “Second Part” of the Frankfurt Codex Rüppel II 7 — i.e., what the modern editorial division calls **2 Meqabyan**. The phonological closeness to our Ch. 15 trio (Mebkyus ≈ Makabjos; Maqabis ≈ Maqäbjos; Yehuda = Jehuda) suggests the same narrative material, differently placed by the modern three-book division vs the medieval two-section division of the Frankfurt MS. See SOURCES.md §1.1 and §6.1 for details.

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1 At that time, the men of Midian rose in enmity against them; they raised their armies to attack Israel. The name of their king was **Akrandyos**; he gathered the great armies of Syria and Cilicia and Damascus in the morning.

2 He encamped beyond the Jordan and sent messengers to Israel, saying: *“Pay me tribute. Otherwise, I have come to punish you, to plunder your cattle, to take all your possessions, to lead your children away captive.*

3 *“I will lead you captive to a land you do not know; there I will make you water-carriers and wood-gatherers.*

4 *“As for your saying, ‘We are God’s people; none can overcome us’ — do not be confident. Is it not the case that God has sent me to destroy you, that I should plunder your wealth? He sent me, that I might gather all that is yours.*

5 *“Other peoples whom I have punished — have their strange idols saved them? I plundered their wealth and provision; them I killed; their children I led captive.*

6 *“In just the same way, if you do not bring me tribute as I have commanded, I will do to you as I did to them.”* And he crossed the Jordan to plunder their cattle and their wealth, and to lead away their wives and children captive.

7 After this, the sons of Israel wept a bitter weeping to God; they cried out utterly; but they had none to help them.

8 Therefore God gave firmness to three brothers; their names are these: **Mebkyus, Maqabis, and Yehuda**. Of fair appearance, they were warriors in all their strength.

> *Note on 15:8:* This verse introduces a **second Maqabean trio** distinct from the five sons of Maqabis in chs. 2–4. The name ማቃቢስ (Maqabis) appears again here — but as one of three brothers in a martial deliverance narrative, not the father of the earlier martyrs. The three names — Mebkyus, Maqabis, Yehuda — partly resonate with the Hasmonean brother-names (LXX 1 Macc 2:2–5: Judah, John, Simon, Eleazar, Jonathan). **Yehuda** = Judah/Judas Maccabeus; the Mebkyus/Maqabis correspondence to specific Hasmonean brothers is less clear and may be mediated through the Geʿez *Zena Ayhud* (Josippon) — a possibility flagged by Horovitz 1905 (p. 196 fn. 1, *“Vielleicht hat der Verfasser ausser Matthäus hier auch das Zena [Ayhud] als Quelle benutzt”*). For the structural placement of this trio in the medieval MS tradition, see the editorial note in the chapter introduction above and SOURCES.md §1.1.

9 When the sons of Israel were heard weeping utterly, the cry of all the sons of Israel grieved their hearts; widows and orphans, their priests and their princes, all the people of Israel, women and boys — all were strewing ashes on their heads and weeping; their nobles were clothed in sackcloth.

10 But those fair-of-form and comely brothers agreed to go and save them. *“Let us go,”* they took counsel together, *“and give our bodies to death for the sake of these people.”*

11 Saying to each other, *“Be of good courage! Be of good courage!”* — girding their swords on their loins, taking their spears in their hands — they went; prepared to do battle with the warrior-king, they went.

12 They came upon him while he was seated at table; and **Mebkyus struck the warrior** — that he might not swallow what he had not chewed, with one stroke he cut off his neck. And Yehuda and Maqabis struck with the sword those who were at the king’s right and left.

> *Note on 15:12:* The phrase *“that he might not swallow what he had not chewed”* (ያላመጠውን ሳይውጠው) is the same Geʿez idiom used in 6:33 of Samuel hewing Agag. Both are table-killings, executed before the victim can finish his bite. The parallel reinforces the typological reading of Mebkyus as a new Samuel.

13 And when their king had fallen, all fled; their spears entered into the breasts of their companions; their bows shattered; they were defeated.

14 But those fair-of-form, comely brothers were saved; nothing evil came upon them. For God had turned his scourging back upon them [the enemies]; and those wicked ones slew one another.

15 They were defeated and died. Until they had crossed the Jordan they cast aside all their wealth; everything that was theirs was left behind. And when the sons of Israel saw them fleeing and going to their camp, they took the plundered wealth for themselves.

16 So God by the hand of Mebkyus and his brothers thus saved the sons of Israel.

17 And the sons of Israel lived a few months pleasing God.

18 But after that, they returned again to their wickedness; the sons of Israel neglected to worship God as was fitting.

19 And he again grieved them by peoples they did not know — who gathered the harvest of their field, who destroyed the planting of their vine, who plundered their flock and slaughtered their cattle before them without sharing them,

20 who led away captive their wives, their sons, and their daughters. Because they always grieve God — for they are the people who have broken his law — they crush their children’s heads before their faces; and they cannot save them.

Chapter 16

Introduction

A **geographic catalog chapter** (9 verses), listing the heathen peoples whose lands and rulers serve as God's instruments. The toponym-list is distinctively post-Hellenistic: **Arabia, Parthia, Seleucia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Caesarea** all belong to the Hellenistic-Roman geography of the eastern Mediterranean. The Assyrian king *Amenezer* (likely Shalmaneser, of 2 Kings 17) is named at v. 4 as God's chosen instrument against Damascus and Samaria.

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1 The people of Tyre and Sidon, dwelling on the seashore and across the Jordan river — in Gilead and Karan, in Canaan and Jebus, in the Girgashite and Edom — and the people of Amalek;

2 all the heathen in their countries and their tribes, in their ordinances and their districts, in the languages of their lands — all dwell as God has set them.

3 Of them, there are those whose work is good and who know God.

4 Of them, there are those whose work is evil, who do not know God who created them; and according to their work, he gave them into the hand of the king of Syria, **Amenezer**;

> *Note on 16:4:* The form አሜኔሴር (*Amenezer*) likely renders **Shalmaneser** (V) — the Assyrian king of 2 Kings 17:3–6 who took Samaria into exile. The standard Geʿez form is ሰልምናሶር (*Salmanasar*); the variant here may reflect a textual corruption or local pronunciation.

5 for he shall take the wealth of Damascus, and shall divide the plunder of Samaria before the king of Egypt.

6 The mountains of Gilead and the valleys of Galaboh, Samaria, and all of Pontus in the land of Judah; those who dwell in Arabia, in Media and Parthia, in Seleucia, and in the mountains of Cappadocia —

> *Note on 16:6:* The catalog is striking for its **Hellenistic-Roman-era horizon** transposed onto a notional "biblical" past: **Arabia, Parthia, Seleucia, Cappadocia, Pontus** all belong to the 1st-century-BCE-to-1st-century-CE geography (Seleucia was the Seleucid capital; Cappadocia became a Roman province in 17 CE). The "Pontus in the land of Judah" is a curious phrase — perhaps the Pontus of the Caspian region is meant, with "in the land of Judah" a marginal misplacement.

7 those who dwell in their districts, who do not know God and do not keep his commandment — these are a stiff-necked people.

8 And he will repay them according to the wickedness of their work and the work of their hand.

9 The district of Caesarea, the people of Gilead and of Amalek — they have agreed together to destroy the city of God which is full of righteousness, in which dwells the Holy One of Israel, who sits upon the chariot of cherubim, before whom stand the exceedingly many angels — the city in which the Lord of hosts is praised.

Chapter 17

Introduction

A short chapter on the **Edomites and Amalekites**, who do not worship God and have a teacher named **Sebelyanos** (ሰብልያኖስ). The chapter's interest is the proper name **Sebelyanos**, which is unique to Meqabyan

and appears to be a Geʿez rendering of **Beliar**/**Belial** (the Second-Temple personification of evil; cf. 2 Cor 6:15; *Testament of Levi* 19; *Sibylline Oracles* III). The chapter ends with a positive contrast: *“the way of God is humility and meekness”* (v. 6).

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1 The armies of Edom and Amalek do not worship God, whose hand holds the rule of heaven and earth. They are criminals who do not walk in truth; therefore they do not fear to tread the temple [of God].

2 Apart from fornication and shedding of blood, eating animals struck by a paw or which have died of themselves and all such things — they have no fear of God before them. These are despised and defiled.

3 They have no faith and no good conduct; they hate good works; they do not know God. Apart from wickedness and plunder, defiled work and uproar of every kind — apart from songs and games as their father **Sebelyanos** taught them — they do not know the way of peace.

> *Note on 17:3:* ሰብልያኖስ (Sebelyanos) is a unique name in Meqabyan; he is named again at v. 5 as *“their enemy Sebelyanos.”* The form may be a Geʿez rendering of **Beliar**/**Belial** (cf. 2 Cor 6:15; *Testament of Levi* 19; *Testament of Reuben* 4–6; *Sibylline Oracles* III), the Second-Temple personification of evil. The phonetic shift (B→S in the initial; *-yanos* / *-iar* in the ending) is unusual but not impossible in Geʿez transmission via Greek (*Σεβελιανός* would be a hypothetical intermediate form). Alternatively, it may be an Ethiopianized form of *Belial* with a Greek-style adjectival ending. Confidence: **medium-low**. Some translation traditions read “Diabolos” / “the Devil” here as a gloss; we retain the proper name.

4 For he rules them with his demons; he teaches each of them every evil work — wickedness and plunder, snatching another’s wealth by force, theft, eating carrion and that which has been struck, and fornication.

5 And everything that resembles it — going to a young man’s wife, shedding blood, eating what is sacrificed to idols and what has died, killing the souls of men by violence, mocking and envy, greed, and every evil work that God does not love — he teaches them this teaching. To draw them far from the way of God who holds the whole world — their enemy **Sebelyanos** brings it upon them.

6 But the way of God is humility and meekness, loving the neighbor and not provoking the brother, mutual affection with every person, and peace.

7 Do not be those who show partiality to a man’s face; plunderers and rebels, snatchers, those who go to a young man’s wife, those who do violence and evil to their neighbor, those who deceive in order to wrong their neighbor in iniquity.

8 They point fingers; they shake themselves; they devise wickedness; they cast lots to lead men astray, that they may descend to eternal judgment.

Chapter 18

Introduction

Chapter 18 expounds the **Watcher / Nephilim tradition** of Genesis 6:1–4. It speaks of the **“sons of Re’ayt”** (የረዓይት ልጆች) — the giant-progeny — whose fathers were angels in heaven, who descended, took wives from the daughters of men, and went down to eternal punishment with the Devil. The shortening of human lifespan from nine hundred years to one hundred and twenty (v. 7) is presented as the consequence of this primordial transgression, quoting Gen 6:3 (*“my Spirit shall not abide upon them”*, v. 8). This chapter’s content most closely parallels **1 Enoch 6–11** (the Watchers fall) and *Jubilees* 5, both of which are canonical in the EOTC.

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1 Remember that you are going to God; all is in his hand; you shall stand before him so that he may judge you according to the work you have done.

2 In times past too there were the wicked and arrogant, those than whom none was greater or stronger — the **sons of Re’ayt**; thus they were. Because they saw their own strength and stature and the might of their arm, they did not set God before them; they did not know that he is their Creator who brought them out of non-existence.

> *Note on 18:2:* The phrase የረዓይት ልጆች (*sons of Re’ayt*) renders the giant-progeny tradition of Genesis 6:1–4 / Numbers 13:33 (*“the sons of Anak from the Nephilim”*). The proper noun ረዓይት is unusual; it may be a Geʿez rendering of **Rephaim** (the dead-giants of Deut 2:11; 3:11) or possibly of **the Anakim**. The narrative content (giants who are sons of descended angels) matches **1 Enoch 6–11** Watchers tradition. The form *Re’ayt* shares its root with **Re’aytawi** of 5:1 (also a textual crux); the relationship between the two is unclear but suggests a lost Geʿez vocabulary for a primordial-giants tradition.

3 And their fathers, while they were angels, used to praise God in heaven with the angels. But when their will led them astray, they descended to the eternal punishment of judgment.

4 They took wives from among the daughters of men; for God had created human flesh for them that he might test them — to test whether they would keep the law and commandment despite the arrogance of their mind.

5 But they did not keep the commandment; and he brought them down with their father the Devil to the Gehenna of fire; for God was angry with the angels who transgressed as men do; because of them the days of man have grown shorter.

6 And the sons of Adam they took with them; with their punishment they brought them down to Sheol.

7 Because the angels erred through the sons of Cain, the days of man have been shortened; whereas in the beginning the days of man were nine hundred, they were reduced to one hundred and twenty years.

8 And God said: *“They are flesh and blood; my Spirit shall not abide upon them.” [Gen 6:3]*

9 Therefore our days have been shortened; furthermore, because of our transgression and our sin, our days are fewer than those of our former fathers, and there are some who die in childhood.

10 But the days of our fathers were many, because they kept his commandment and did not grieve God.

11 They rebuked their daughters that they might teach them; they rebuked their sons that they might not transgress God’s commandment.

12 Therefore, together with their sons and daughters, because they did not break God’s commandment, their days were truly many.

Chapter 19

Introduction

Chapter 19 expands the Cain-line narrative with extra-canonical material: Cain’s invention of musical instruments (v. 1, drawing on Gen 4:21 and *Jubilees* 4); the tradition that **Abel had a beautiful wife whom Cain killed him to obtain** (v. 2, paralleled in *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* and rabbinic midrash); the descent of the angels (Watchers) to take wives from Cain’s beautiful daughters; the deception of Adam and Eve by the Devil; and a closing **Psalm 78** citation (vv. 13–17) on the duty of transmitting the faith from fathers to children.

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1 When the sons of Cain multiplied, they made lyre and tambourine, harp and cymbal, games and song of every kind.

> *Note on 19:1:* This expands Gen 4:21 (Jubal, "the father of all who play harp and pipe"). The "games and songs" added to the standard instrument-list reflect the broader Ethiopian Christian tradition (cf. *Jubilees* 4; *Kebra Nagast* §22) that the Cainite line invented profane culture.

2 Furthermore — because she was beautiful, on account of whom the righteous Abel was killed — from his wife (whom Cain married after killing her husband) beautiful and comely daughters were born to Cain; for after killing his brother, he took her [as wife]; and she was his.

> *Note on 19:2:* This is a striking extra-canonical tradition: **Abel had a wife**, who was beautiful, and **Cain killed Abel because of her**, and then took her to wife. The closest parallel is in the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (an Ethiopic Christian text widely read in the EOTC) and in rabbinic midrash (*Genesis Rabbah* 22:7 mentions the sisters of Cain and Abel as the *casus belli*). The text presupposes that the reader knows this tradition.

3 Taking them with him, he separated from his father and went westward to the valleys of **Qefaz**; and the children of that beautiful woman were beautiful like their mother.

4 Therefore the angels descended to the sons of Cain; they did not delay even an hour; they took for themselves as wives whomever they chose.

5 Therefore — because of their error, since they led us into error together with them — God was angry with us also and with them.

6 And the Devil, deceiving with the words *"You shall become as gods, like God your Creator,"* led our father Adam and our mother Eve into his error.

7 They in their ignorance — it seemed true to them — broke the commandment of their Creator who brought them from non-existence into existence, that they might bow down and praise his holy name.

8 Those who took the wealth of God for themselves — their Lord humbled them; and that arrogant one also he humbled.

9 As David said, *"In a sinner's arrogance the poor is set on fire"* [cf. Ps 10:2 LXX] — for our father Adam by the Devil's arrogance was judged in truth before his Creator God.

10 Likewise, by the sons of Cain the angels who erred took us into their error. Therefore the days God has given us are fewer than the days of our fathers.

11 But they had done good works; no evil approached them; for they had set their hearts firm on God; and they taught their sons and daughters not to deviate from the commandment of God which had been taught to them.

12 But they — even if they had done good works — if they had not told their children and taught them, it would not have benefited them.

13 As David said: *"They did not hide from their children for another generation; they taught God's glory, his power and wonders that he had done; that, as they remembered, they should teach their children; that they should pay attention and do; that they should commit God's judgment as a trust to them; that by their moral conduct they should please God; that as their fathers had, they should keep his commandment.* [Ps 78:4–7]

14 *"In their childhood, fearing God and his judgment as they learned from their fathers, the commandment which their fathers committed to them as a trust they did not abandon.*

15 *"And their children — that they might make their conduct beautiful, and give honor to their Creator — learned from their fathers; for they kept his law and loved him.*

16 *"And he hears their prayer; he does not disregard their petition; for he is the forgiver.*

17 *"He multiplies the turning back of his wrath; in all his scourging he did not destroy."* [Ps 78:38]

Chapter 20

A short transitional chapter (4 verses) — a positive coda before the homily resumes.

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1 Our brothers, take thought! Do not forget what they told you of old: that God preserves the righteousness of those who do good works.

2 Upon the earth he multiplies their fruit; the calling of their name endures for good unto eternity; and their seed shall not lack grain upon the earth.

3 For he contends for them; he does not give them into the hand of their enemy; from the hand of their adversaries and from all their enemies who hate them, he saves them.

4 And to those who love his name, he is a helper in their time of affliction; he keeps them; he forgives all their sins.

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Chapter 21

Introduction

Chapter 21 is the **trust-in-God chapter**: a contrast-pair argument set out through the careers of David (vv. 1–3), Hezekiah, and Manasseh (vv. 4–6), demonstrating that trust in God is what brings deliverance and that the absence of trust brings exile and humiliation. The middle of the chapter (vv. 7–18) develops the practical consequences: military victory, agricultural blessing, mockery in the enemy's hand for those who break God's law. The closing section (vv. 19–31) returns to creation-theology: man alone among all creatures transgresses his Creator's commandment, yet God has set him over all creation; whoever does God's will is given the inheritance promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

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1 David trusted in God; because he had believed in him, [God] became his refuge; and from the hand of King Saul he saved him.

2 When his son Absalom rose up; when the Philistines rose up; when the Amalekites and Edomites and Karniyonites rose up — because he had trusted in him and kept his law, God saved David from all the enemies who opposed him.

> *Note on 21:2:* The ethnonym ቀርኒዎናውያን (*Karniyonites*) is uncertain. It may corrupt **Carians** (the mercenaries of the eastern Mediterranean used in Egyptian and Persian armies, mentioned in Herodotus II.152 and 2 Sam 8:18 LXX [Cherethites]) or possibly reflect *Karneans* / inhabitants of the Hellenistic Karnaim of the Transjordan (cf. 1 Macc 5:26, 43–44). Confidence: **medium-low**.

3 But the wicked kings who did not trust in him — God did not save; for victory is from God; in the hand of their enemies they were defeated.

4 Hezekiah trusted in God; and from the hand of the arrogant Assyrian he saved him.

> *Note on 21:4:* The reference is to **Sennacherib** of Assyria (2 Kings 18–19; Isaiah 36–37), whose army was destroyed before Jerusalem in 701 BCE.

5 But his son Manasseh did not put his trust in God; in the hand of his enemy he was defeated. Those enemies of his who defeated Manasseh were not like him; because he had not put his trust in God, and because he did not fear God who had honored and made him great — they bound him and led him to their country instead.

Note on 21:5: The reference is to **2 Chronicles 33:11** — the Chronicler's tradition that Manasseh was carried in fetters to Babylon by the king of Assyria, repented there, and was restored. This tradition is not paralleled in 2 Kings 21; it is distinctively Chronicler's.

6 Because he had not made his way pleasing to his Creator God — that his days might be multiplied, that his enemy might contend on his behalf, that God might be strength and firmness for him before and after — [God] withheld from him the wealth he had given.

7 For it is better to trust in God than to trust in many armies and horses, in bow and shield.

8 And the man who trusts in him shall live; he shall be honored; he shall be utterly exalted.

9 God shows no partiality of face. Those who do not trust in God and trust in the abundance of their wealth — they shall be cast out from the grace and honor he gave them.

10 But those who trust in him he keeps. Those whom others call ignorant, he makes ignorant — because they have not steeled their hearts to follow God and keep his law; in their time of affliction, and when their enemies oppose them, he does not help them speedily.

11 But for the one who steels his heart in following God, in keeping his commandment and his law — for him he becomes a refuge in time of affliction.

12 By killing his enemy and capturing his enemy's cattle, by capturing his enemy's countrymen, by raining seasonable rains, by the fruit of the bud, by the gathering of the heap, by the fruit of his planted place,

13 by the fruit of summer-rain and winter-rain, by giving grass and freshness, by giving various fruits that those under his hand may be made glad — [God] makes him glad.

14 That they may eat the labor of others, that they may be filled with the plunder of their enemies, that they may plunder beasts, sheep, and cows, that they may eat and clothe themselves from another's table, that they may take captive their enemies' children — [God] makes them glad.

15 And God does all this for the one he loves; but the one he hates, he makes prey for his enemy.

16 He binds his hands and his feet; he casts him into his enemy's hand; he makes him a mockery for his enemies. For the one who has broken God's law has become a shedder of blood; therefore [God] is not pleased with the seed of his house.

17 And at the time of judgment he does not stand firm. When [God] repays evil to evildoers, he repays the doers of wickedness with the fruit of their work.

18 But to those who do good, he repays good; and it has been ordained from God that he should keep them by [the work of his own] hand.

19 And [man] was ordained to keep his commandment, to do his will, to praise God his Creator. For he is the servant over all his creation; for of all fleshly creatures, only man transgresses his Creator's commandment.

20 All [other creatures] know him; and all who live according to their order are kept by his commandment and his law as he has commanded them.

21 But man dares against God who has set him over the beasts and the cattle and the birds and all his creation.

22 God gave to our father Adam all the creation he had created — whether what is in the sea or what is on the dry land. To do what he willed, that he might eat them on earth like grain, that he might rule them and put them to work, that beasts and cattle alike might obey man — God gave them; and that the kings of men might obey God who gave them honor, that they might bow and obey him — over all his creation he appointed them.

23 But if they go out from his law, he separates them from the wealth he gave them; for he rules heaven and earth, and to the one who does his will, he gives it.

24 Whom he wills, he appoints; and whom he wills, he removes. He kills and saves; he scourges and forgives.

25 There is no other like him; for he is Lord of all the creation he created, and there is none who finds fault with him. In heaven above, on earth beneath, there is no other God besides him.

26 He appoints and removes; he kills and saves; he scourges and forgives; he impoverishes and enriches.

27 He receives the petition of those who petition him; the prayer of those who do his will with a pure heart, he hears; he does their will in all that they have asked.

28 Great and small he makes obey them; in the mountains and hills, in the caves and forests, in the pit of the earth, in sea and land — all that is in them is theirs.

29 To those who do the will of their God, all is theirs; from his blessing he does not deprive them; the wages of their praise he gives them.

30 And in heaven, to their fathers Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, to David and Hezekiah, to Samuel — those who did not go out from his law and his commandment — he gives the honor he has prepared;

31 that he may give them the inheritance he swore to their fathers Abraham and Isaac and Jacob from of old, who served him; and that they may be made glad in his kingdom.

Chapter 22

A short chapter (11 verses) on the **two memorials**: the names of those who did good are kept in light; the names of evil kings and princes shall be reckoned to shame even after their death. The chapter closes with God's first-person warning: *"I, the LORD, am a jealous one who avenges those who hate me and do not keep my word; and those who honor me and keep my word, I will honor."*

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1 Take thought of the names of those who do good works; do not forget their work.

2 Strive that your name may be as their names — that in the light-dwelling he has prepared for the good kings and princes who did the will of God, you may be glad with them.

3 Furthermore — know and understand the names of the evil kings and princes who shall be judged, and who shall be reckoned to shame even among men after their death.

4 For though seeing and hearing, they did not make their way pleasing to God; they shall be judged together with the godless and the deniers who did God's will [outwardly only].

5 As for you — be gracious and meek and upright; do not walk in the path of the godless with whom God is angry.

6 Judge truly; vindicate the widow and the orphan; save them from the hand of the sinners who plunder them.

7 Stand for the orphan as a father, that you may save him from the hand of the plunderer. Be terrified when the orphan's tears fall before your face — that you may not be terrified by the sea of fire in which unrepentant sinners shall sit.

8 Direct your foot toward the way of peace; seek peace and follow her. For the eyes of God are toward the righteous, and his ears toward their petition.

9 But God's face is against those who do evil — that he may destroy their memorial from the earth; and no man hiding on mountain or rampart he leaves behind.

10 *"Until I have destroyed those who do not keep my word, I will not turn back my face. For I, the LORD, am a jealous one who avenges those who hate me and do not keep my word.*

11 *"And those who honor me and keep my word, I will honor."*

Chapter 23

A short chapter (7 verses) on **the way of Cain and the way of Abel** — two paths, with the judgment on the unrepentant *"written on their shoulder, read out before angels and men and all creation at the judgment"* (v. 5). Adds the extra-canonical motif (already established in 19:2) that **Cain killed Abel out of jealousy over a woman**.

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1 Do not walk in the way of Cain — who killed his brother, who in meekness had followed him, trusting that he loved him.

2 He killed his brother out of jealousy over a woman. Those who work iniquity and jealousy and denial against their neighbor are like him.

3 They went in the way of Cain — not in the way of meek Abel; for Abel was meek as a sheep, and his blood, in the purity of his heart, was as the blood of an innocent lamb sacrificed to God. But those who go in the way of meek Abel love God.

4 As Abel was meek, so God loves everyone who walks in meekness — as the righteous and meek Abel.

5 But the wicked God disregards; their judgment awaits them on their neck; on their shoulder it is written. At the time of judgment, before the angels and men and all his creation, it shall be read out.

6 Then the deniers and rebels who have not done God's will shall be ashamed.

7 And a dreadful word shall be given to them: *"Cast them into the fire of Gehenna which has no exit forever."*

> *Note on 23:5:* The image of **the judgment-text inscribed on the shoulder** and read aloud at the assize is unusual; the nearest parallel is the *Apocalypse of Paul* §16–17 (the soul-records read out before God), and possibly Rev 20:12 (the books opened).

Chapter 24

Introduction

Chapter 24 opens with **Gideon** (v. 1) as the model of trust-in-God against impossible odds (Judges 7), then shifts into a long first-person divine speech (vv. 2–15) where God demands exclusive worship, warns against idol, divination, and sorcery, and predicts the rise of foreign oppressors. A distinctive prophetic catalog at v. 7 pairs **Samuel, Ezekiel, Enoch, and Asaph** — the inclusion of **Enoch** alongside the canonical prophets reflects the EOTC canon (1 Enoch). The chapter closes (vv. 8–22) with a long denunciation of corrupt rulers — gluttons, drunkards, perverters of justice — *"who eat human flesh and drink human blood"* (v. 21).

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1 When **Gideon** trusted in God, with a small army he defeated the uncircumcised heathen army — a great host, like locusts beyond counting.

> *Note on 24:1:* Gideon's victory in Judges 7 with 300 men against the Midianite host of *"the men were like locusts in number"* (Judg. 7:12).

2 *"Kings and princes! There is no other God besides me; do not trust in other gods.*

3 *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of your mother's womb, who raised you, who fed you, who clothed you. Why do you grieve me? Why do you worship another god besides me?*

4 *"All this I did for you; and what did you give me? What do I seek from you? Nothing but the salvation of your souls — that you may walk in my law and ordinance, in my commandment; and that I might give you the salvation of your souls.*

5 *“God who rules all has said: ‘Save yourselves from idol and from divination and from sorcery.’*

6 *“Upon those who do this and those who hear them, upon those who do their will and become their friends, upon those who walk in their commandments — God’s scourge shall come.*

7 *“For peoples whom you do not know and who do not pity you shall rise against you. If you do not do the will of God your Creator — as the prophets said, from the prophet Samuel onward; as Ezekiel and Enoch and Asaph spoke — they shall eat the fruit of your labor.*

> *Note on 24:7:* The prophetic catalog here pairs **Samuel, Ezekiel, Enoch, and Asaph** — the inclusion of **Enoch** (whose book is canonical in the EOTC) alongside canonical prophets is distinctively Ethiopian. **Asaph** is the psalm-author of Psalms 50, 73–83.

8 *“And he said: ’Evil men will come, changing their clothes. Apart from eating and drinking, apart from adorning themselves with silver and gold, apart from doing every work God does not love — they have no other law.*

9 *“They are prepared to go to food and drink; from the time they rise from their sleep, from morning till evening they run to evil work. In their path is wretchedness and destruction; their feet have no way of peace.*

10 *“They do not know the way of peace; before their eyes there is no fear of God; without faith and conduct, they are perverse and wicked — greedy, gluttonous and drunken, intoxicated, and their iniquity is lawless. To licentiousness and shedding of blood, to theft and denial, to plundering another’s wealth by violence — they go.*

11 *“They condemn without judgment and without law; for they do not fear God who created them; therefore there is no shame before them.*

12 *“They do not respect the faces of those they see; they do not respect grey-haired and elders. When they hear of the wealth of the world, before they have seen it with their eyes they make it their own; for before their eyes there is no fear of God, and when they see it with their eyes, it is as if they had eaten it with their mouth.*

13 *“And their princes consume entrusted wealth. For they are deniers, and there is no truth in their mouth — what they said in the morning, they do not repeat in the evening.*

14 *“They neglect the cry of the poor and the hungry; they do not save the foreigner from the hand of those who plunder them; their disturbing kings hasten to wickedness.*

15 *“Therefore — let kings save the oppressed and the foreigner; let them not be those who deny justice.’”*

16 But they are criminals who exact tribute and drink blood; their way is evil; they have no pity when they eat the calf with its mother or the bird with its chicks; all they see and hear they make their own.

17 They love to gather for themselves; they do not pity the sick and the poor; in violence they snatch another’s wealth; that they may stuff themselves in their house and be glad in it, they gather all they find.

18 Like one who has come up from a pit and his trace cannot be found, like one who does not return to his house, like swift ash they shall perish. Because in their lifetime they did no good works, when God seizes them in his anger — woe to their soul.

19 When God disregards them, as they are by themselves they perish at once; for God endures them [in patience] in case they should turn in repentance — for he does not hasten to destroy; in their own time they perish.

20 But if they do not turn in repentance, like the ancients before them who did not properly keep God’s commandment, he destroys them.

21 They eat human flesh and drink human blood. Going to sin they gird themselves with violence; before them there is always no fear of God; from the moment they rise from their bed they do not rest from working iniquity.

22 Upon the earth, that they may destroy the lives of many — their work is eating and drinking, running to wickedness and destruction.

Chapter 25

Introduction

Chapter 25 contains the **God-is-everywhere** litany (vv. 4–7) — *"I fill from horizon to horizon, and all creation is in my hand."* It includes one of two references in 1 Mq that name **Ethiopia** (v. 9; the other is 28:38), alongside Saba (Sheba), India, and Nubia — reflecting the Aksumite Christian Indian-Ocean geography. The chapter develops the contrast between the riches-as-mirage of sinners (vv. 14–16) and the open-handed generosity of the righteous (vv. 17–18).

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1 *"Their way is perverse; for all go on the misleading way of Satan; therefore the LORD of all says: 'In the time when I take hold of her in my wrath, woe to her body.'*

2 *"They do not know God's way; they have turned it behind them; they have despised my law.*

3 *"And I, in the latter time of fulfillment, will repay them according to the wickedness of their work. At the time of judgment, as the wickedness of their work is written before me, I will avenge myself; for I am the LORD who kills and saves, who scourges and forgives — they cannot escape from my hand.*

4 *"For I, the LORD, fill from horizon to horizon; all creation is in my hand. Below the earth and above the heaven, in the sea and in the deeps of the waters — there is none who escapes from my hand.*

5 *"Below the earth I command the serpent; in the sea, the fish; in the air, the birds; in the wilderness, the wild ass. From horizon to horizon all is mine.*

6 *"For it is I who work wonders and signs before me; in heaven above and on earth beneath, none escapes my hand. There is none who says to me, 'Where will you go? What will you do?'*

7 *"I command the archangels and the host; every name that is called is mine; the birds of heaven, the wild beasts of the forest, all the cattle — all are mine.*

8 *"The south wind and the summer-heat rise up; the Red Sea, in the latter days, shall be parted because of the splendor coming upon it.*

9 *"For he rules the living and the dead, from Noba and Saba, from Ethiopia and Hindekē, with all their districts and borders.*

> *Note on 25:9:* This is one of two passages in 1 Mq (the other is 28:38) that names **Ethiopia** (ኢትዮጵያ) directly, alongside **India** (ሕንደኬ) and the south-Arabian / east-African terms **Noba** (Nubia) and **Saba** (Sheba). The list reflects an Indian Ocean trade-horizon characteristic of late-antique Aksumite-Christian geography. The Aksumite kingdom traded actively with India from the 4th c. CE onward, and "from India to Ethiopia" became a standard merism in Geʿez literature for the inhabited east.

10 *"With the rod that is in his hand, in meekness he keeps all; his rod is greater than all rods; with his rod he keeps his sheep.*

11 *"His horn is greater than all horns; his kingdom is exalted above all kingdoms; his authority rules the whole world; he is all-powerful; nothing is impossible for him.*

12 *"Above, he commands the clouds; below, he sprouts grass for the cattle; upon his shoots he gives fruit.*

13 *"As he wills, he feeds all according to their kinds; with their own food he feeds all he created — below the earth for the ant and the* kubkuba* (mole?), above the earth for the wild beasts and the cattle. To him who prays he gives [the answer to] his prayer; the petition of widows and orphans he does not disregard.*

14 *"Rather, in every time, the prayer of the pure ones who pray to him he receives. For the iniquity of evil men is as gathered wind, and the assembly of the wicked as mist.*

15 *"Their joy is as a fleeing bird; the comeliness of their countenance, of silver and gold, perishes on earth — it is a sham for the godless. Their gold does not profit them; the moth eats their garments.*

16 *"The heap of grain and wheat is eaten by worm and weevil; all passes like the day that passed yesterday; as a word that has gone out from the mouth does not return, so is the wealth of sinners. Their fine living is a passing shadow; the wealth of sinners before God is like a borrowed garment.*

17 *"But the righteous, even if they prosper, God does not disregard. Having mercy on the poor, hearing the judgment of orphans and the needy, clothing the naked from their own garments, not withholding from foreigner and hungry from the household wealth God has given them — they have grown rich [for this purpose].*

18 *"They do not pervert the judgment of the illiterate; they do not delay the wage of the hired servant. For the word of God, like a two-edged sword, is true and honored — in the count of months and in the measure of weights, they do not do iniquity."*

> *Note on 25:18:* The phrase **"like a two-edged sword"** (አፋ ሁለት እንደ ሆነ ሰይፍ) is a direct echo of **Hebrews 4:12** (*"the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword"*) and Rev 1:16 / 2:12. Another NT-era echo.

Chapter 26

A very short chapter (5 verses) on **fruit as the test of righteousness** — leaf must flourish for fruit to grow; without root, there is no fruit; without good works, there is no righteousness.

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1 *"But the poor again take thought in their beds; if the rich do not receive them, they become like dry wood without freshness; without moisture the root does not flourish; and without root the leaf does not flourish.*

2 *"For the leaf serves to adorn the fruit; if the leaf does not flourish, it bears no fruit. The head of a man is the fruit of righteousness; that which has no fruit has no good work.*

3 *"If he does righteousness, he bears uprightness; and God is pleased with the man who works truth and uprightness.*

4 *"To him who prays, he gives [the answer to] his prayer and the reward of his mouth; and the righteous he does not wrong on account of the righteousness he has done.*

5 *"For God is righteous, and he loves righteousness; the sinner he does not justify without repentance for the evil work he has done. The soul of every man is held in his hand; and he rules heaven and earth; in judgment he shows no partiality to rich or to poor."*

Chapter 27

Introduction

Chapter 27 is a **creation-account paraphrase** of Genesis 1, organized day by day, closing with the planting of Adam in the Garden, the prohibition of the tree, Eve's deception, the fall, and the curse on the earth (vv. 14–20). One distinctive Ethiopianism: the **forbidden tree is identified as a fig tree** (ዕፀ በለስ, v. 17), following the *Cave of Treasures* and *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* tradition rather than the canonical Hebrew (which leaves it unspecified).

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1 He created the whole world from non-existence; he prepared the mountains and the hills utterly; he established the earth upon water. That it might not be shaken, he bounded it with sand. For at the beginning, God's word said: *"Let there be light."*

2 The world being in darkness, light came to be; and God did his work; in fitness and proportion he prepared and established the world; he said: *"Let there be evening and darkness"*; and evening and darkness came to be.

3 And again God said: *"Let there be light."* It dawned; and light came to be. The upper water he lifted up to heaven.

4 Like a tent he stretched it out; with wind he established it; the lower water he set under the deep of the sea.

5 The lock of the sea he shut with sand; that they should not sink down he established them with his Spirit; in it he placed the wild beasts and the cattle, and the great creatures; he placed in it the countless ones, the seen and unseen.

6 On the third day God created upon the earth the plants, all the grass, the trees, and the fruits that bear each according to its kind —

7 beautiful to behold and sweet to eat. He created the tree of life, and grass, and every plant whose seed is within it. For cattle and wild beasts and birds he created food; for all that he had created, he gave food.

8 Evening came; morning came; on the fourth day God said: *"Let there be light in the firmament of heaven."* And God created the sun, the moon, and the stars. That they might shine upon the earth, and feed day and night, he set them in the firmament of heaven.

9 After this the sun, moon, and stars, day and night, took their turns.

10 On the fifth day God created all the wild beasts and animals that dwell in the water, all the birds that fly in heaven, the seen and the unseen — all this God created.

11 On the sixth day he created beasts and cattle and worms; and having created and prepared all, **he created Adam in his image and his likeness.**

12 He gave him to reign over the beasts and the cattle he had created; furthermore, he gave him the cattle and beasts, the fish, and the leviathans of the sea.

13 All the cows on earth, the sheep, every animal seen and unseen, he gave him.

14 And Adam, whom he had created in his image and likeness, he set in Paradise. To eat, to tend the Garden, there to praise God — he commanded him.

15 That he should not break God's commandment, he commanded him not to eat from the tree which brings death, which makes known evil and good.

16 For he said: *"When you eat from that tree, you shall surely die."*

17 Our mother Eve, deceived by the serpent's deception, ate from **that tree of the fig**; and she gave it to our father Adam.

> *Note on 27:17:* The forbidden tree as **a fig tree** (ዕፀ በለስ) is the standard EOTC identification, drawn from the *Cave of Treasures* and *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (canonical in the Ethiopian tradition) rather than from the canonical Hebrew Genesis 3, which leaves the species unspecified. The same identification appears in some rabbinic sources (*Genesis Rabbah* 15:7).

18 And he ate from that tree; and upon himself and his children he brought death.

19 For he broke his commandment; because he had eaten from that tree from which God had commanded him not to eat — God was angry with our father Adam; he drove him out of Paradise and sent him forth. That he might till her — and with the sweat of his face eat the wages of his labor — when he broke his commandment, God gave him the very earth which was cursed on his account, which brings forth thistle and thorn.

20 And when God brought him out into this earth, Adam returned to sorrow and to the brooding of the heart. To till the earth, in the sweat of his face, in toil and labor, he began to eat.

Chapter 28

Introduction

Chapter 28 is the **salvation-history retelling chapter** — the longest in 1 Meqabyan (49 verses) and the most explicit retelling of the biblical narrative in the entire book. It compresses the canonical and deuterocanonical history from **Cain through Esther** into a single sweeping arc, naming most of its protagonists: Cain and Abel, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve tribes, then the judges-and-kings cycle (David, Jephthah, Gideon, Samson, Barak, Deborah), then **Judith** (v. 32), then most importantly **Mattathias and his sons** (v. 33) — *the single most explicit Hasmonean reference anywhere in 1 Meqabyan* — then the Goliath-type giant-slaying (v. 34), the Babylonian exile (vv. 35–36), and finally the **Esther narrative** with King **Artaxerxes**, **Mordecai**, **Esther**, and **Haman** all named (vv. 38–48). Chapter 28 functions as the historical-typological proof of the book's central thesis: God repeatedly raises deliverers when Israel cries out; the cycle of sin-affliction-deliverance is the rhythm of providence.

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1 After this his children multiplied. Of them, there were those who praised God and honored him, who did not break his commandment.

2 There were prophets who spoke what was and what was to be. Of his children there were also sinners who spoke falsehood and wronged men. **Cain, Adam's firstborn, became evil; he killed his brother Abel.**

3 Because he had killed his brother Abel, God was greatly angry with Cain; and because she had drunk his blood, God was angry with the earth.

4 And God said to Cain: *"Where is your brother Abel?"* And Cain, in the pride of his heart, said: *"Am I my brother Abel's keeper?"*

5 Abel was righteous; but Cain, by killing the good man Abel his brother, became a sinner.

6 Furthermore, a righteous Seth was born; for Adam had begotten thirty daughters and thirty sons. Of them there were the good; and there were the wicked.

> *Note on 28:6:* The "thirty sons and thirty daughters" of Adam is from **Jubilees 4** — a tradition canonical in the EOTC. Seth's righteousness here functions as a counterpoint to Cain's wickedness, anticipating the Sethite line of Gen 5.

7 Of them, there were prophets and righteous ones; of them, there were sinners and deceivers.

8 Of them, there were the good and blessed who fulfilled their father Adam's will; from Adam onward — down to the righteous Noah who kept God's commandment — they fulfilled all that he had told his son Seth.

9 And he [Noah] caused his sons to keep God's law; and as their father Noah had told them, he charged them: that they too should tell their children, and that they should keep God's law.

10 And they, after them, lived teaching their children.

11 But Satan, when he had brought their fathers to the grave, dwelt in the idols that bore their images, and lived inflicting [harm] and speaking to people who consented to him; and they did all that the wicked teacher commanded.

12 They lived worshiping idols according to their custom until **righteous Abraham** — who fulfilled God's will — arose.

13 And God made a covenant with him with fire and whirlwind. For he had first separated himself from his kindred, walking in the way of righteousness.

14 And God swore to him and to his children to give them the land of inheritance forever.

15 Likewise, to **Isaac** he swore to give him the inheritance of his father Abraham; and to **Jacob** likewise, to give him the inheritance of his father Isaac.

16 After them, their seed — Jacob's sons of the twelve tribes of Israel — he made into kings and priests; he blessed them. *"Be many, even of many,"* he said.

17 And the inheritance of their fathers he gave them. But while he was feeding them, while he was loving them in all things — they did not leave off grieving God.

18 When he destroyed them, at that time they sought him; turning back, they ran to God; and God, because he loved them, forgave them.

19 Not for their own sake, but for their fathers' sake; for he is merciful and forgiving to all he created.

20 That he may satisfy the hungry body, he stretches forth his right hand with blessing; that he may multiply grain for food, he opens his eye in mercy.

21 To the raven's chicks and to all that call upon him, he gives food. When they cry to him, he saves the sons of Israel from the hand of their enemies.

22 But they return to grieve him; therefore he sends the heathen around them; and they destroy them, kill them, take them captive.

23 Again they cry to God in shouting and weeping; and he sends a helper. There was a time he saved by the hand of the prophets.

24 There was a time he saved by the hand of the judges. And when they grieved God, their enemies subjugated them and led them captive.

25 David arose and saved them from the hand of the Philistines. Again they grieved God; and he raised against them those who troubled them.

26 There was a time he saved by the hand of **Jephthah**; and again they forgot God who had saved them. Because God had brought their recompense upon them, he sends wicked enemies who afflict them and utterly take them captive.

27 Again, when they were afflicted, they cried to him; and he saved by the hand of **Gideon**. Again, by the work of their hand, they grieved God.

28 Again he sent against them those who tormented them; turning back, they wept and cried to God.

29 Again he saved by the hand of **Samson**; and they rested a little. From the wickedness they had done before, they arose to grieve God.

30 Again he sent against them others who afflicted them. Again they cried to God that he might send them a helper; they wept; and he saved by the hand of **Barak and Deborah**.

31 Again, worshiping God, they lived a few years; again they forgot him; in their earlier wickedness they grieved God.

32 And he sent against them others who afflicted them; again he saved them **by the hand of Judith**; again, after they had remained a few months, they rose to grieve God in their wickedness as before.

> *Note on 28:32:* The reference is to the deuterocanonical **Book of Judith** (canonical in the EOTC), specifically Judith's slaying of Holofernes (Jud. 8–13).

33 And he raised against them the heathen who ruled them; and they cried to God; they wept; and **by the hand of Matatyu and his sons** he saved them at the corner of the house.

> *Note on 28:33:* ማታትዩ = **Mattathias** — the father of Judas Maccabeus and the leader of the Hasmonean revolt of 1 Maccabees 2. **This is the single most explicit Hasmonean reference in all of 1 Meqabyan.** It locates the Maqabean-warrior episode of ch. 15 (Mebkyus, Maqabis,

Yehuda) within the broader Hasmonean tradition the Ethiopian Church knew through Geʿez *Zena Ayhud* (Josippon). The phrase *“at the corner of the house”* (በቤት ማዕዘን ላይ) is obscure — possibly a corruption of a place-name (Modein? Beth-Horon?), possibly an idiomatic expression for “in their own land.”

34 For **Aḥimelek**, who came to attack the land of Judah, struck the head of **the giant** [*re’aytawi*]; and when that giant died, his army was scattered; they fled. The sons of Israel struck them as far as the Jabbok; not one of them was left to flee.

Note on 28:34: This verse compresses a giant-slaying narrative whose biblical origin is unclear. አሂሜሌክ (*Aḥimelek*) is a priestly name in 1 Sam 21–22 (the priest of Nob whom Saul killed) — but he appears here as a warrior. ረዓይታዊው (*re’aytawi*, “the giant”/“the visionary”/“the chief”) is the same noun as at 5:1 — confirming our reading there that *re’aytawi* names a primordial-giant or Goliath-type figure. The toponym ኢያቦቅ (*Iyaboq*) is the Jabbok river (Gen 32:22). The verse may telescope material from 1 Sam 17 (David vs Goliath) with episodes from Judges or 1 Maccabees in a way difficult to disentangle. Confidence: **medium**; this is one of the most textually compressed verses in 1 Mq.

35 After this, having remained a little, they rose to grieve God; and he raised against them the heathen who ruled them; and they cried to God; they wept. But because they had always grieved God, and had forgotten his law, God disregarded their cry and their weeping.

36 They took them captive with their priests to the land of the Chaldeans.

Note on 28:36: The Babylonian exile of 586 BCE (2 Kings 24–25; 2 Chr 36); standard naming of Babylon as “Chaldea.”

37 There, doing sin and worshiping idols, those deniers — the sons of Israel — did not leave off grieving God; and with the heathen who had taken them captive, they mingled.

38 And God in his anger, that he might destroy them at once on account of their sin in that place, put wrath in the mind of King **Artaxerxes** — that he might not leave their children behind, **from India to Ethiopia**, in the land of Persia. The king having put a thousand pieces of gold into his treasury, he announced that on a fixed day he would destroy them.

Note on 28:38: This is the second of two passages naming **Ethiopia** in 1 Mq (the other is 25:9). The phrase *“from India to Ethiopia”* (ከሕንደኬ ጀምሮ እስከ ኢትዮጵያ) is a direct quotation of **Esther 1:1 / 8:9** describing the extent of the Persian empire under Ahasuerus/Artaxerxes — the standard merism for the inhabited east of the Persian world. The translator’s pleasure at finding Ethiopia named in the canonical text would have been considerable.

39 And he did so: by the king’s permission he wrote a letter of decree, and gave him the seal that was in his hand to convey it to the land of Persia.

40 As the king commanded, on the one day on which it pleased him to destroy them, he gave him the seal. Their plunder, the gold and silver, was commanded to be brought into the king’s treasury.

41 Then, when the sons of Israel heard this, they cried utterly to God; they wept. They told **Mordecai**; and Mordecai told **Esther**.

42 And Esther said: *“Fast! Pray! All the people of the sons of Israel — wherever you are, cry to God.”*

43 And Mordecai put on sackcloth; he scattered dust on his head; and the sons of Israel in their land fasted; they prayed; they repented.

44 Esther wept exceedingly. Though she was queen, she put on sackcloth; she scattered dust; she shaved her head; she did not anoint herself with perfume as the Persian queens are accustomed to do; with deep heart she cried to God the Creator of her fathers; she wept.

Note on 28:42–44: The fasting-and-mourning sequence corresponds to **Esther 4:1–17** (canonical Esther) and especially to the **LXX Greek Additions to Esther** (“the Prayer of Esther,” Add. Esth. C/14:1–19), which describe Esther’s penitential preparation. The detail of **shaving her head** and **refusing perfume** is not in the canonical Hebrew Esther but appears in the LXX Additions

and in *Targum Sheni* (the Aramaic targum on Esther). This is one of the clearest pieces of evidence that 1 Mq is drawing on the longer LXX/EOTC form of Esther, not the Hebrew.

45 Therefore, in the presence of King Artaxerxes of Persia, [God] gave her favor; and for her fathers' Creator she made a great banquet.

46 The king and **Haman** entered the banquet which Esther had prepared. There, what Haman had wished to do against Mordecai — God repaid the recompense to Haman; on a tall tree they hanged him.

47 That Israel should be left as they wished, that they should not be made tributary, should not be plundered, should not be wronged, and that their property should not be taken from them — the king's letter was issued.

48 That their land should not be destroyed, that their cattle should not be taken captive, but that in all the land of Persia they should be loved and honored — the letter was issued. For when in repentance they cried out to him in petition, God forgives Israel in this way.

49 And when they grieve him, he raises the heathen who afflict them; at that time, that he may send them a helper, that he may save them from the hand of the heathen who oppress them — they weep utterly; they cry out.

Chapter 28 — Confidence summary

Verse(s)	Issue	Confidence
28:6	"Thirty sons and thirty daughters" (Jubilees 4 tradition)	High
28:32	Judith ID (deuterocanonical)	High
28:33	Mattathias and his sons (Hasmonean reference)	High
28:33	"At the corner of the house" idiom	Low — possibly corrupted toponym
28:34	Aḥimelek vs the giant; Jabbok	Medium — compresses multiple episodes
28:38	Artaxerxes / "India to Ethiopia" / Esther 1:1 LXX	High
28:44	Esther shaving head, refusing perfume (LXX/Targum Sheni tradition)	High

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Chapter 29

Introduction

Chapter 29 is the **Exodus chapter** — opening with the brick-making in Egypt (vv. 1–2), the sending of Moses and Aaron (v. 3), and the drowning of Pharaoh (v. 4). The body of the chapter (vv. 5–13) is a divine

speech in classic Hebrew Bible covenant-exchange form (*“Do good for me, and I will do good for you; keep my commandment, and I will keep your body”*), with David named as the exemplary deliverance-recipient. The chapter closes (vv. 14–17) with Samuel — his prophecy to Eli, his anointing of kings, and finally God’s command: *“Go and anoint David the son of Jesse from Judah.”*

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1 And when the men of Egypt afflicted the sons of Israel with hardship — by making them build bricks, in all the work they made them do, by making them tread mud without straw —

2 when overseers urging on the workers were appointed and they oppressed them, they cried out to God to save them from making all the brick of Egypt.

3 Then he sent them Moses and Aaron to help them. For God had sent them to bring his people out of the dwelling of Pharaoh’s tyranny, the king of Egypt; they saved them from brick-work. For in his arrogance he had refused to send Israel away that they might serve God and offer sacrifice in the wilderness.

4 And because God disregards the arrogant, on account of his arrogance he drowned Pharaoh together with his army in the Red Sea.

5 So also with kings and princes — those who disregard God’s word, who do not do his will, who do not give their wages to those who serve in good things, who do not honor his exalted name: all whom he appoints and makes king, those who do not do good — he disregards.

6 *“If they make my kingdom straight, I will make their kingdom straight, says God who is all-powerful.*

7 *“Do good to me, and I will do good to you; keep my commandment, and I will keep your body. Walk in my commandment, and I will walk according to your mind.*

8 *“Love me, and I will love your life. Draw near to me, and I will strengthen you.*

9 *“Trust in me, and I will save you, says God who is all-powerful.*

10 *“Do not walk crosswise. Draw near to me, and I will draw near to you; for I love straight ways, says God who is all-powerful. Sinners and deniers, cleanse your hands; remove the wickedness of your mind;*

> *Note on 29:10:* The phrase **“Draw near to me, and I will draw near to you”** is a direct echo of **James 4:8** (*“draw near to God, and he will draw near to you; cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts”*), which itself draws on Zechariah 1:3 / Malachi 3:7. The combination of “draw near” + “cleanse your hands” + “deniers/sinners” in adjacent clauses makes this one of the more likely direct NT echoes in 1 Mq.

11 *“and I will remove my wrath from you; in forgiveness and mercy I will return to you.*

12 *“And I will remove from you the enemies — the criminals who work iniquity — even as I saved my servant **David** from the great cunning of the enemies who met him: from the hand of the warrior **Goliath**, from the hand of **Saul** who sought to kill him, and from the hand of his son **Absalom** who wished to take his kingdom —*

13 *“so also those who keep my law and fulfill my will, I will save like him; I will give them honor as their inheritance; in this world and the world to come, I will appoint them over all that they may be made glad.”*

14 While he was yet a child, from his childhood God had chosen him for his pleasing way of life — he shall be one with the blessed kings who, in their pleasing way of life, served God; as Samuel did.

15 While he was yet serving in the dwelling of the Lord God, [God] told the prophet Samuel — that he might tell the aged priest **Eli**, whose work was good.

16 And when he had grown up serving in God’s house, by God’s command [Samuel] appointed his people and anointed their kings. For God had loved that the people he had chosen from the sons of Israel be appointed; and so, when [Samuel] had fulfilled the will of God who had created him, God gave him in his hand the anointing of kingship.

17 And while Saul was in his kingship, God said to the prophet Samuel: *“I have loved David the son of Jesse, born of the tribe of Judah; go and anoint him.”*

Chapter 30

Introduction

Chapter 30 continues the first-person divine speech — God's renunciation of the house of Saul (vv. 1–6), with the central covenant-honor formula at v. 7: *"He who honors me, I will honor; he who loves me, I will love"* — a direct citation of 1 Samuel 2:30. The closing section (vv. 12–16) is a universal-providence catalog: God feeds humans, birds, fish, crocodiles, leviathans, hippopotami, and all that moves in water or air.

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1 *"Because he transgressed my word and grieved me, I hated the house of Saul.*

2 *"And I disregarded him; and because again he did not keep my word, I will not make a king from his kindred.*

3 *"Likewise, from those who do not keep my word, who do not walk in my law and ordinance — I will withhold my kingdom and my gift from their children unto eternity.*

4 *"When I exalted them, they did not exalt me; when I honored them, they did not honor me; therefore I shall destroy them and not return to honor them again.*

5 *"When I did good for them, they did not for me; when I forgave them, they did not forgive on my behalf.*

6 *"When I made them rulers over all, they did not make me ruler; when I honored them above all, they did not honor me; they did not keep my commandment.*

7 *"And I have taken from them the gift I gave; in my anger as I have sworn, I will not return it to them. God who is all-powerful says thus: 'Him who honors me, I will honor; him who loves me, I will love.* [1 Sam 2:30]

8 *"Those who do not honor me and have not kept my law, I will separate from the gift I gave them.*

9 *"God who is all-powerful says thus: 'Him who loves me, I will love; him who magnifies me, I will magnify.*

10 *"For I, the LORD, am all-powerful; in heaven above and on earth beneath, there is none who escapes my hand. The one who kills and saves, who scourges and forgives — I am the LORD.*

11 *"Honor and majesty are mine; whom I love, I honor; whom I hate, I bring low; for it is I who judge and avenge.*

12 *"Those who love me and call upon my name always — I am the one who forgives. For the rich and the poor, I am the one who feeds.*

13 *"Not man alone; but birds and beasts, fish in the sea and wild creatures, even serpents — I feed.*

14 *"Crocodiles and leviathans,* shikoko* and hippopotami, the swift one — I feed.*

> *Note on 30:14:* The animal-catalog includes the ሽኮኮ (*shikoko*) — possibly a hyrax or rock-badger (Procavia capensis), characteristic of the East African landscape; and ጉማሬዎች (hippopotami) — explicitly attested by their Geʿez name in scripture only in Job 40:15 (*behemoth*). The list reflects the African fauna familiar to the Aksumite scribe.

15 *"All that moves in water, all that flies in the air — is mine.*

16 *"In all that is fitting and necessary, I am the one who feeds all who seek me."*

Chapter 31

A short chapter (7 verses) on **God's exclusive authority to appoint and depower**: kings reign only by God's will, the hungry are poor only by his command, the strong are strong only by his command. David's deliverance from **Goliath the giant** (*re'aytawi*) and from Saul and another giant is recited as the exemplary case.

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1 *"Kings do not reign without my will; the hungry-fasters do not become poor without my command; the mighty do not grow strong without my command.*

2 *"I gave David favored-status, and to Solomon I gave wisdom; to Hezekiah I added years.*

3 *"To Goliath I shortened his days; to Samson I gave strength; again, I made his strength weak.*

4 *"My servant David I saved from the hand of the giant Goliath.*

> *Note on 31:4:* ረዓይታዊው ጎልያድ = *the giant Goliath*. This is the explicit identification confirming that the textual crux *re'aytawi* of 5:1 and 28:34 means **"giant"** in Meqabyan's vocabulary, with Goliath as the paradigmatic instance.

5 *"Furthermore, from the hand of King Saul, and likewise from the hand of another giant who opposed him, and from the hand of all who opposed and hated him — I saved him; for he kept my commandment.*

> *Note on 31:5:* The reference to **"another giant"** likely points to one of David's later giant-killings — Ishbi-benob, Saph, or Lahmi (2 Sam 21:15–22; 1 Chr 20:4–8) — the four giant-descendants of Rapha who appear in David's later wars.

6 *"And I loved him. Kings and princes who keep my commandment I love; for they have pleased me, I give them strength and victory over their enemies.*

7 *"Furthermore, that they may inherit the land of their fathers, the bright and free inheritance which I swore to their fathers, I give them."*

Chapter 32

A very brief chapter (4 verses) — God recites his gifts to Israel (vineyards they did not plant, wells they did not dig, honeycomb, sheep's milk, the wheat-cake) and warns the kings: *"Do not grieve me as the sons of Israel grieved me when they worshiped other gods."*

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1 *"You also, kings and princes — hear my word; keep my commandment, says God who is all-powerful. Whom I have kept and saved, whom from their parents onward I have raised, whom in all they sought I have fed,*

2 *"whom I have brought into the harvest of the land, whom I have fed fittingly with the blessing of the earth — the planting of the vine you did not plant, the fruit of the olive, the cleared well of water you did not dig,*

3 *"the comb of honey, the milk of the ewe, the embroidered garment with the fine wheat, and all that is necessary for them I gave: I, the LORD their God — do not grieve me as the sons of Israel grieved me and worshiped other gods.*

4 *"From those who asked of me, there is none to whom I did not give."*

> *Note on Chapter 32:* The "vineyards you did not plant" / "wells you did not dig" pair is from **Deuteronomy 6:10–11** — the great covenant warning at the threshold of the land. Meqabyan transposes this Deuteronomic motif into a kings-and-princes setting.

Chapter 33

Introduction

Chapter 33 contains the **manna citation**: *“As David said, ‘Men ate the bread of angels’ ”* (v. 1, citing Ps. 78:25). The chapter develops into a contrast between the **light-filled heavenly city** awaiting good kings (vv. 8–10) and the Gehenna prepared for the wicked. The bright-thrones and golden-floor imagery from Ch. 6 recurs in compressed form.

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1 *“Furthermore, as David said — ‘Men ate the bread of angels’ — in the wilderness I fed them with manna; that they might worship me fittingly and in truth, I did all this for them. [Ps 78:25]*

> *Note on 33:1:* Direct citation of **Psalm 78:25 LXX** (*“man ate the bread of angels”* — ἄρτον ἀγγέλων ἔφαγεν ἄνθρωπος). The Geʿez የመላእክትን እንጀራ is the standard rendering.

2 *“But they did not worship me; and I disregarded them, says God who is all-powerful. They grieved me; they went in a way that was not mine.*

3 *“And I will repay them as their work. Because they have disregarded my worship, and have not stood firm in my counsel and my ordinance — as the work of their hand, I disregarded them; to the punishment of Gehenna I will bring them down.*

4 *“And they did not keep my commandment, and I will be angry with them, and shorten their days on earth.*

5 *“O king! Are you not a man who dies and decays — tomorrow worm and rotting dust?*

6 *“But today you boast and exalt yourself as a man who does not die forever.*

7 *“You are a man who today appears healthy and tomorrow dies, says God who is all-powerful.*

8 *“But if you keep my commandment and my word, I will give you to inherit a holy city with the honored kings whose dwelling is bright, whose crowns are beautiful, whose thrones are of silver and gold, who upon them are adorned and have done my will.*

9 *“In the city which is a dwelling-place prepared for those who do good works, you shall be made glad.*

10 *“But those who do wickedness shall not enter that city which the honored kings enter.*

11 *“For they have not kept my word and my ordinance, says God who is all-powerful.”*

Chapter 34

Introduction

Chapter 34 is the **four-kingdoms apocalypse** — the most internally diagnostic chapter in 1 Mq for dating and provenance. The opening verses (vv. 1–2) lay out a sequence of kingdom-pairings in which one kingdom is established over another, climaxing in an extraordinary claim: ***“The kingdom of Ethiopia shall be established over the kingdom of Alexandria”*** (v. 2). This is best read as **Aksumite-Christian political-eschatological triumphalism** — a claim that the Christian Ethiopian kingdom shall rise above its great Mediterranean rival, Alexandria. Combined with the explicit *“Rome over Macedonia”* and *“Nineveh over Persia”* of v. 1, the catalog reads like an inversion or restatement of the Danielic four-kingdoms schema (Dan 2, 7), but with Ethiopia inserted as one of the named powers. **This verse is the single strongest piece of internal evidence for Ethiopian (Aksumite or post-Aksumite) provenance of 1 Mq.**

The rest of the chapter develops the Day-of-the-LORD theme with cosmic and ethnographic specifics — Judah, Cyprus, Samaria, Damascus, Babylon, India, Nubia, Sheba, Egypt, Ethiopia — and includes a notable Nebuchadnezzar-to-Daniel citation at v. 14 about *“the spirit of God upon you”* (cf. Dan 4:8–9, 5:11–14).

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1 The kingdom of Media shall perish; but the kingdom of Rome shall be utterly established above the kingdom of Macedonia; and the kingdom of Nineveh shall be established above the kingdom of Persia.

2 And **the kingdom of Ethiopia shall be established above the kingdom of Alexandria**; and the kingdom of Moab shall be established above Amalek.

> *Note on 34:1–2:* This is the most distinctive eschatological-political pronouncement in 1 Mq. The pairings should be read as ascendancy-prophecies: each first-named kingdom is to triumph over each second-named.
>
> - **Media → Rome over Macedonia → Nineveh over Persia → Ethiopia over Alexandria → Moab over Amalek.**
>
> This schema does **not** map onto Daniel 2 / 7's standard four-kingdoms sequence (Babylon → Persia → Greece → Rome). Instead, it appears to construct an alternative chain culminating in Ethiopian supremacy. The most likely setting for this rhetoric is the **Aksumite period (4th–7th c. CE)** or **early Solomonic period (13th–15th c. CE)**, when Ethiopian Christian kings asserted ascendancy over Egypt (which had become Islamic but contained the Coptic Patriarchate to which the EOTC was canonically subordinate). The pairing **"Ethiopia over Alexandria"** could reflect either an early Aksumite claim of equal-or-superior Christian status to the Alexandrian patriarchate, or a later Solomonic-era claim to ecclesiastical-political supremacy. The "Moab over Amalek" closing is harder to interpret — possibly a stylized pagan-vs-pagan inversion. **This verse alone is sufficient grounds for concluding that 1 Meqabyan in its present form is of Ethiopian Christian composition, not a translation from a lost Geʿez of foreign provenance.**

3 *"Brother shall rise against brother; that they may slaughter one another* — as he said, God shall do vengeance.

4 And he said: *"Kingdom shall rise against kingdom, people against people, country against country.*

5 *"There shall be strife: war, famine, plague, earthquake, drought; for peace and love shall perish; the scourge of God shall fall upon her.*

> *Note on 34:4–5:* The eschatological-strife catalog — *"kingdom against kingdom, people against people, famine, plague, earthquake"* — is the direct **Synoptic Apocalypse vocabulary** of **Matthew 24:7 / Mark 13:8 / Luke 21:10–11** (*"nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in various places"*). Another clear NT-era citation.

6 *"From east to west as the visible lightning, the dreaded Day of God shall suddenly come;*

> *Note on 34:6:* The "lightning from east to west" is from **Matthew 24:27 / Luke 17:24** (*"as the lightning comes out of the east and shines as far as the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be"*) — another direct Synoptic citation.

7 *"and at that time every man shall receive according to his work and the labor of his hand, according to the fruit of his work. For God himself has said: 'On the day of judgment and the day when their foot stumbles, I will avenge myself; for the day on which they are reckoned for destruction has come.' [Deut 32:35]*

8 *"At that time, God in eternal condemnation shall destroy those evildoers who do not walk in his law: the people of Judah and Cyprus, of Samaria and Damascus, and of Babylon;*

9 *"of the western islands, India and Nubia, Sheba and Egypt, and Ethiopia — and all who dwell in them.*

> *Note on 34:9:* The list **"India and Nubia, Sheba and Egypt, and Ethiopia"** echoes the Indian-Ocean-trade geography seen at 25:9. The naming of "western islands" (በምዕራብ ደሴት) is unusual — possibly the Aegean / Mediterranean islands, possibly the Indian Ocean atolls. The fact that **Ethiopia is here named among the peoples to be judged** is striking — Meqabyan does not idealize Ethiopia simply because of its Christian status; the prophetic voice judges Ethiopia as one of the lawless peoples alongside Judah and Babylon.

10 *"Then they shall know that I, the LORD — who rule heaven and earth, who give honor and love, who kill and save — am God.*

11 *"I am the one who brings forth the sun, and sends it to its entrance; I am the one who brings forth evil and good.*

12 *"I am the one who brings against you the heathen peoples whom you do not know — who consume the wealth you have labored for, the flock of your cows and your sheep.*

13 *"They shall lead your children captive, crushing them before your face; you cannot save them. Because the Spirit of God has not abided upon you, because you have not feared the commandment of God which you have heard — they shall consume your sweat and your freshness.*

14 *"As Nebuchadnezzar said to the prophet Daniel — 'I see the Spirit of God upon you' — the man on whom the Spirit of God abides knows all things.*

> *Note on 34:14:* The citation is to **Daniel 4:8–9** (*"there is in you the spirit of the holy gods"* — King Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel) and **Daniel 5:11–14** (Belshazzar told the same of Daniel by the queen-mother). Both are Aramaic-original passages in canonical Daniel.

15 *"The man on whom the Spirit of God abides knows all; the hidden is revealed to him; he knows the revealed and the hidden. For nothing is hidden from the Spirit of God.*

16 *"But we are people who shall die tomorrow; all the work we did in hiding shall be revealed.*

17 *"As gold and silver are tested in fire — because they have not kept God's commandment — so shall sinners be tested in the latter day.*

18 *"At that time also, all the works of the sons of Israel and of all the heathen shall be tested."*

Chapter 35

A short chapter (8 verses) of **woe to the strong of Israel** — those who go to the tavern morning and evening, who pervert justice, who do not hear the cry of the orphan and widow. The chapter closes (vv. 5–8) with a desolation-prophecy: the land that was full of blessing shall become wilderness; thistle and thorn shall grow; wild beasts shall dwell in it; *"she has drunk the cup of his wrath."*

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1 *"Because you have not judged true judgment for the orphan whose father and mother have died, God will be angry with you. Woe to you, mighty men of Israel!*

2 *"You who morning and evening go to the tavern and become drunk, who pervert justice, who do not hear the judgment of the orphan whose father and mother have died, or the judgment of the widow — who live in sin and licentiousness — woe to you!"*

3 God says to the mighty of Israel thus: *"If you have not walked in my commandment, and have not kept my word, and have not loved what I love — woe to you!*

4 *"I will bring scourge and destruction and affliction upon you; you shall perish as the moth consumes; your trace shall not be found in your districts.*

5 *"Your country shall become wilderness; everyone who saw it before shall clap his hands. 'Was not this country full of blessing and all that is good? Has God so done to it on account of the sin of the people who dwelt in it?'"* — so shall they marvel at her.

6 Because God has humbled her in the dust of the earth — because she has stiffened her heart; because she has exalted herself; because she has stretched out her neck — and because of the arrogance of those who dwell in her, she has become a wilderness; thistle and thorn have sprouted on her. Woe to her!

7 Reed and sedge she has sprouted; wilderness and desert she has become; wild beasts dwell in her.

8 To those who pass through her, she has become a terror. For the wrath of God has fallen upon her; on account of the arrogance of her mind and the wickedness of the people in her, she has drunk from the cup of his wrath.

> *Note on 35:5–8:* The wilderness-of-thistle-and-thorn and *"she has drunk the cup of his wrath"* combination draws on **Isaiah 5:6** (the vineyard of God overrun with thorns), **Isaiah 51:17** (Jerusalem drinking the cup of wrath), and **Jeremiah 25:15** (the cup of the wine of wrath). All standard prophetic-judgment idiom.

Chapter 36

Introduction

Chapter 36 is the **climactic closing chapter** of 1 Meqabyan and one of its longest (46 verses). It opens with an apostrophe to the **Macedonians and Amalekites** (v. 1) — paired here in a single warning against pride — and to *"the Ishmaelite, son of the slave-woman"* (v. 4) — possibly a polemic against the contemporary Arab/Islamic-era horizon. The chapter then develops into a long retrospective on **Abraham as the model believer** (vv. 17–22), culminating in God's first-person testimony at v. 22: *"Abraham is my friend; Isaac is my favored one; Jacob is the beloved of my heart; in them I have been praised."* The Abraham-as-friend-of-God formula echoes **James 2:23** / **Isaiah 41:8** / **2 Chronicles 20:7**.

The middle of the chapter (vv. 23–37) traces Israel's repeated apostasy with manna, the Canaanite mountain-and-cave idolatries, and a remarkable **catalog of Greco-Roman pagan deities** at v. 29: Baal of Canaan, Dagon of the Philistines, **Apollon, Artemis (Arṭemades), and Serapion** — the Hellenistic pantheon. This catalog is a strong dating indicator, locating at least the underlying tradition in a setting where these deities were live religious competitors.

The closing section (vv. 39–46) contains the **stars-and-sand apportionment**: Abraham was told his seed would be as the stars of heaven AND as the sand of the sea (Gen 22:17); 1 Mq glosses this as meaning that **the stars** = the righteous in heaven, while **the sand** = the sinners going to Gehenna (vv. 40–42). The book closes (vv. 44–46) with the final resurrection-doctrine summary — *"the dead shall rise; those who did good works to eternal life; those who did evil to eternal punishment; but the righteous shall reign with him forever"* — followed by **"Amen, Amen"** (አሜን፡ አሜን).

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1 Men of Macedonia, do not boast! Amalekites, do not stiffen your neck! For there is God who shall avenge himself against you.

2 Though you exalt yourself to heaven, you shall descend to Sheol.

> *Note on 36:1–2:* The image of *"exalting to heaven and descending to Sheol"* is a direct echo of **Isaiah 14:13–15** (Lucifer's boast and fall) and of **Matthew 11:23** / **Luke 10:15** (the woe against Capernaum: *"shall you be exalted to heaven? you shall be brought down to Hades"*).

3 Israel, in old times when they entered the land of Egypt under the kingdom of Moab and Media, [God] said: *"Do not boast, for it is not fitting to contend with God."*

4 *"You also, **Ishmaelite, son of the slave-woman** — why do you stretch out your neck against that which is not yours? Do you not consider that, when [she] rises to be judged in the earth, on the day of judgment God shall judge you?*

> *Note on 36:4:* The address to **"the Ishmaelite, son of the slave-woman"** (ይሰማኤላዊ የባርያ ልጅ) is striking. Within the canonical scheme, Ishmael as son of Hagar (Gen 16, 21) is contrasted to Isaac as son of Sarah; the Pauline reading at **Galatians 4:21–31** allegorizes this. The pointed second-person address here — "you Ishmaelite" — is most plausibly read as a polemic against an Arab/Islamic-era political adversary, since Arabs traditionally trace their genealogy through Ishmael. If so, this would place the present form of Ch. 36 in the **post-Islamic conquest** Ethiopian

> setting (7th c. CE onward). However, it could also represent inner-biblical Edomite/Ishmaelite polemic from an earlier stratum. Confidence: **medium**; this is one of the most dating-sensitive verses in the book.

5 *"At that time you shall receive according to the work of your hand. Why do you exalt your mind? Why do you stretch out your neck? says God who rules all.*

6 *"As you have challenged those who are not your kindred — so I will challenge you; for you do what you have desired in order to do evil; therefore in the place to which I have sent you, I disregard you.*

7 *"And I will do likewise to you, says God who is all-powerful. But if you do good, and love what I love — all that you have asked, I will hear.*

8 *"If you do my will, I will do your will; I will set myself against your enemies for you; I will bless your work, your seed, and your children.*

9 *"I will bless the flock of your cows and your sheep; if you walk in my commandment, and do what I love, I will bless all on which you lay your hand, says God who is all-powerful.*

10 *"But if you do not do my will, if you do not walk in my commandment and my law — all this misery foretold before shall reach you; for I will not endure you in my commandment; you have not walked in my law; you cannot escape my wrath which always comes upon you.*

11 *"For you have not loved what I loved. Though I brought you from non-existence into existence and created you, you have neglected to praise me and worship me.*

12 *"That you might do whatever you wished, I gave you honor and lordship over those beneath you. That you might kill and save, do and undo, honor and humble, raise up and lay low — it was yours.*

13 *"And if you do the will of God and walk in his commandment, that you may be made glad with him in his lordship, that you may be a sharer with the people who have inherited the holy land — he loves you.*

14 *"For he has said: 'If they endure me, I will give them honor and love as inheritance; in my sanctuary I will make them glad; like the sacrifice of the eucharist they shall be chosen and beloved, says God who is all-powerful.'"*

> *Note on 36:14:* The phrase *"like the sacrifice of the eucharist"* (እንደ ቍርባን መሥዋዕት) is unmistakably **Christian-liturgical** vocabulary: ቍርባን (*qurban*) is the standard Geʿez term for the Eucharist. This is one of the most direct Christian-era anchors in 1 Mq. Whether original or interpolated, the phrase situates this section firmly within the EOTC liturgical world.

15 Do not neglect doing good and the path of salvation, that you may cross over from death to life.

16 Those who do good works, however — God preserves them in all that is good, that they may be his servants like **Job**, whom God preserved from all evil.

17 Like **Abraham** whom he saved when he killed the kings; like **Moses** whom he saved from the hand of the Canaanites with whom Abraham had lived, and from the hand of Pharaoh — when they sought to make him worship the idol morning and evening, day and night, troubling his body —

18 but he, when they sought to draw him to their idols, endured, saying *"No."*

19 He continued to say *"No"* to them; he continued to worship God who had created him. From his childhood, Abraham who had believed in him **was the faithful friend of God**.

20 Because he utterly loved God, until he died he did not neglect to worship God; until the day of his death he did not transgress his commandment; he taught his children that they should keep the commandment of God.

21 And as their father Abraham had done, they did not transgress the commandment of God. *"I have a friend on earth whose name is Abraham,"* he said to the angels — God spoke about them this way: his servants **Isaac and Jacob**, the children of Abraham, did not transgress God's law.

22 ***"Abraham is my friend; Isaac is my favored one; Jacob is the beloved of my heart; in them I have been praised, says God who is all-powerful."***

Note on 36:22: The triple-formula **“Abraham my friend / Isaac my favored / Jacob my beloved”** is the theological climax of 1 Meqabyan. **“Abraham my friend”** (*“Abraham wedajē”*) directly echoes **James 2:23** (*“Abraham believed God… and he was called the friend of God”*), itself drawing on **Isaiah 41:8** (*“Abraham my friend” — ahavi / philos mou*) and **2 Chronicles 20:7**. The triple-patriarch structure is standard liturgical idiom, but the specific gradient (friend → favored → beloved) appears to be a Meqabyan composition.

23 And though he utterly loved the sons of Israel, they continually grieved him; and he endured them, feeding them with manna in the wilderness.

24 Their garments did not wear out; their feet did not become tired, for they had eaten the bread of knowledge — manna.

25 But their mind was always far from God; from the beginning they had been doers of wickedness; there was no hope for their salvation.

26 They became as a perverse bow; in their lovely conduct they did not serve God like their fathers Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; on their mountain and their hill they always grieved him with their idol; on the mountain, in the cave, and under the trees they ate.

27 They slaughtered the bull; they offered sacrifice; they rejoiced in the work of their hand; they ate of the remainder of the sacrifice; they drank the libation-portion of the drink-offering; **with demons they sang and made merry.**

28 And the demons admired all their games and songs, all their drunkenness; they fornicated beyond measure; the plunder and greed God does not love, they did.

29 To the idol of Canaan, to Baal; to the idol of Midian; to the idols of the Philistines, to Dagon and **to Apollon**; **to Arṭemades and to Serapion**;

Note on 36:29: The pagan-deity catalog is the most striking single piece of Hellenistic-era evidence in 1 Mq: - ዳጎን (Dagon) — the Philistine fish-deity (1 Sam 5; Judg 16:23). - አጶሎን (Apollon) — the Greek deity Apollo. - አርጤማዴስ (Arṭemades) — the Greek deity Artemis (with Geʿez ending *-des*); cf. Acts 19:24–35 (Diana of the Ephesians). - ሰራጲን (Serapion) — the Hellenistic-Egyptian syncretic deity Serapis, dominant in Ptolemaic Alexandria from the 3rd c. BCE through Late Antiquity.

The pairing of **Apollo** + **Artemis** + **Serapis** is the standard imperial-Roman-era civic pantheon of the eastern Mediterranean. The presence of **Serapis** is especially diagnostic: the Serapeum of Alexandria was destroyed by Christians in 391 CE, after which the cult quickly declined. This catalog therefore most plausibly reflects a setting **before c. 400 CE**, when Serapis-worship was still a live religious competitor — or alternatively a literary preservation of an earlier-stratum tradition.

30 to all the idols of the surrounding heathen, they offered sacrifice. They worshiped, doing all that they saw and heard the heathen do; the games and songs of the heathen, their roaring, they performed.

31 The people of Israel, who said *“We worship God,”* did so. That they might keep God’s commandments and refrain from worshiping idols —

32 [though God] fed them with the grain of the threshing-floor, brought them to the harvest of the land, brought near to them the honey from the comb, fed them with manna, [and gave them the Torah commandment] not to worship any god besides their fathers’ Creator as Moses had told them in the Law — yet they did not do his commandment and his law.

33 What they desired and sought, he did not withhold; for he is their God; he fed them what they loved.

34 But they did not leave off grieving God; when he gladdened them, they forgot God.

35 When he brought scourge upon them, they cried out to him; and from the affliction that came upon them, he saved them; again they were openly glad; they lived many years.

36 And immediately, as before, they returned their hearts utterly to grieve God; and he raised against them the heathen around them, that they should destroy them; afflicting them, they made them tributary.

37 Again, turning back, they cried swiftly to their Creator God.

38 And he forgave them — not on their own account, but on account of their fathers who had served God from old in their pleasing conduct, and to whom he had confirmed his oath: their fathers Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

39 He loved them that he might multiply their seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea — those who loved him and kept his commandment.

40 Those like the sand of the sea are the **souls of sinners** from among the sons of Israel who, at the resurrection of the dead, shall be separated and shall enter Gehenna.

41 But those who are called **like stars shining in heaven** are the **souls of the righteous** from among the sons of Israel. For God said to Abraham: *"Look to heaven by night; count the stars of heaven if you can. So shall your righteous children shine like the stars of heaven in the kingdom of heaven."*

> *Note on 36:39–41:* Meqabyan here reads **Genesis 22:17** / **Genesis 15:5** (the stars-and-sand promise to Abraham) as a typological allegory: the **stars** are the saved, the **sand** is the damned. This is a distinctive interpretive move; the canonical reading takes the two metaphors as synonymous (multitude). The closest parallels are in **3 Baruch 4:16–17** and **Greek Apocalypse of Esdras** 5:24–28, both of which similarly split the Abrahamic promise into a "saved/damned" allegory.

42 *"Furthermore, look to the seashore and the river-shore; see what is in the sand; count it if you can. So are your children who, at the resurrection of the dead, shall descend to Gehenna."*

43 And Abraham **believed in God; and therefore it was reckoned to him as righteousness**; and his hope on earth was fulfilled — his wife Sarah, even after she had grown old, bore the son Isaac.

> *Note on 36:43:* Citation of **Genesis 15:6** (*"Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness"*), the same verse cited by Paul at **Romans 4:3** and by James at **James 2:23**. The pairing of this verse with v. 22 ("Abraham my friend") replicates the exact New Testament Abraham-typology: faith reckoned as righteousness + friendship with God.

44 And again, on account of his faith, he obtains the kingdom in heaven. For he has believed:

45 that the dead shall rise; that those who did good works shall go to eternal life; and that those who did evil shall, at the resurrection of the dead, go to eternal punishment. **But the righteous who did good works shall reign with him forever.**

46 And the evildoers shall be judged forever. Amen. Amen.

> *Note on 36:44–46:* The closing tricolon is the doctrinal capstone of 1 Meqabyan: **(1) the dead rise; (2) the righteous go to eternal life and reign with God; (3) the wicked are judged forever.** The double-Amen (አሜን፡ አሜን) is the standard EOTC book-closing formula and marks the decisive end of 1 Meqabyan.

Chapter 36 — Confidence summary

Verse	Issue	Confidence
36:4	"Ishmaelite, son of the slave-woman" — Islamic-era polemic?	Medium
36:14	"Sacrifice of the eucharist" (ቍርባን) — Christian-liturgical anchor	High
36:22	"Abraham my friend" formula (= Jas 2:23, Isa 41:8)	High

Verse	Issue	Confidence
36:29	Apollon, Arṭemades (Artemis), Serapion — Hellenistic pantheon	High — strong dating indicator
36:39–41	Stars-vs-sand allegory (saved vs damned)	High — but the interpretive split is distinctive
36:43	“Believed God and reckoned as righteousness” (Gen 15:6 = Rom 4:3, Jas 2:23)	High
36:46	Closing double Amen	High — definitive book-closing

End of the First Book of Meqabyan

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Translator's closing note on 1 Meqabyan:

This translation of 1 Meqabyan was prepared as a fresh CC0 English rendering from the modern Amharic of the EOTC Bible (nehemiah-osc.org compilation) by Claude, an AI assistant from Anthropic, in May 2026. It is **not peer-reviewed**, **not collated against the Geʿez** (e.g. EMML 515 or Frankfurt Rüppel II 7), and represents a **single-witness, AI-assisted draft** intended as a starting point for serious scholarly translation work. The footnotes mark the most significant philological, textual, and intertextual issues but are not exhaustive.

The book is here divided into 36 chapters following the source numbering. Key narrative beats: Ch. 1 (Ṣiruṣaydan's idolatry); Ch. 2 (introduction of Maqabis's three sons); Chs. 3–4 (martyrdom and post-mortem appearance to the king); Chs. 5–14 (sustained homily on resurrection and royal duties); Ch. 15 (Mebkyus-Maqabis-Yehuda warrior trio defeat Akrandyos); Chs. 16–27 (homily on Watchers, Cain, creation); Ch. 28 (salvation-history retelling: Mattathias, Esther); Chs. 29–35 (homiletic conclusion); Ch. 36 (Abraham as friend, stars-and-sand allegory, final "Amen, Amen").

The most dating-significant features are: 1. **Ch. 13:3** post-Hellenistic toponyms (Capernaum, Achaia, Cyprus); 2. **Ch. 13:6** Mark 13:24–25 citation; 3. **Ch. 13:7** 1 Cor 15:26 echo; 4. **Ch. 14:20** 1 Cor 2:9 citation; 5. **Ch. 28:33** Mattathias-and-his-sons (Hasmonean reference); 6. **Ch. 34:2** Ethiopia-over-Alexandria (Aksumite-Christian provenance indicator); 7. **Ch. 36:14** "sacrifice of the eucharist" (Christian liturgical anchor); 8. **Ch. 36:29** Apollo/Artemis/Serapis pagan-deity catalog (pre-c. 400 CE indicator); 9. **Ch. 36:43** "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (the Pauline/Jamesian Abraham-typology).

Taken together, the evidence places at least the present form of 1 Meqabyan within **Christian-era Ethiopian composition**, with a probable window spanning **Aksumite through Solomonic Ethiopia (4th–14th c. CE)** and possible later editorial layers. Scholarship since Horovitz 1905 has not converged on a more precise dating — Horovitz himself declined to commit (*"die Entstehungszeit des Buches konnte ich nicht bestimmen,"* p. 195) — and the internal evidence (Aksumite trade-horizons, Roman provincial toponyms, sectarian polemic, dense NT citation) supports the broad window without singling out a specific century. See the scholarly apparatus for fuller treatment of the dating and authorship questions.

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The Second Book of Meqabyan

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Preface to 2 Meqabyan

The Second Book of Meqabyan stands in a remarkable relation to the First. Where 1 Meqabyan opens with the pagan Chaldean tyrant **Ṣiruṣaydan** confronting and martyring the five sons of **Maqabis-of-Benjamin**, 2 Meqabyan opens with a different and seemingly opposite scenario: a Moabite king, also named **Maqabis** (Maqabis-of-Moab), arrives at the head of a Moabite-Edomite-Amalekite-Philistine coalition and **destroys Jerusalem itself**, carrying its righteous inhabitants into captivity. He is — God says explicitly in 3:3 — God's chosen instrument of judgment against an apostate Jerusalem, much as Nebuchadnezzar is in Jeremiah.

What follows is one of the most extraordinary **conversion narratives** in Ethiopian biblical literature. The prophet **Re'ay** (literally "Seer") confronts Maqabis-of-Moab with God's coming judgment, and Maqabis responds with extreme penance: he digs a pit, descends into it up to his neck, and weeps until God forgives him. Following his conversion, he adopts the full Mosaic observance — removing idols and diviners from his household, learning Torah from the Jewish children he had taken captive, observing Jewish dietary laws, offering sacrifices toward Jerusalem, and even commissioning the construction of Tabernacle-style furnishings (lampstand, table, veil, vessels). He becomes the EOTC's most striking "righteous Gentile" figure — closely paralleling **Ruth the Moabite** (Ruth 1:16, *"your God shall be my God"*) but extended to a male royal who maintains Jewish observance in a full Torah-life.

Then, after his death, **King Ṣiruṣaydan of the Chaldeans** (the same villain as 1 Mq chs. 1–6) arrives. He captures Maqabis-of-Moab's young sons, demands that they sacrifice to his idol (Ba'al Pe'or), and burns them when they refuse. As in 1 Mq Ch. 4, the martyred boys appear to Ṣiruṣaydan in his bedchamber with drawn swords and preach to him about the impotence of idols. The narrative structure replicates that of 1 Mq exactly: martyrdom by fire → post-mortem appearance → king's failed repentance.

This narrative architecture has major implications for understanding the **Meqabyan collection as a corpus with shared canonical reception** — though critical scholarship since Horovitz 1905 treats the three books as compositionally distinct (1 Mq narrative martyrology; 2 Mq inverted Maqabis-of-Moab narrative with sectarian polemic; 3 Mq homiletic anthology). The EOTC liturgical tradition, however, receives them as a unit:

1. **The recurring villain is Ṣiruṣaydan** — the Chaldean tyrant whose name encodes Tyre + Sidon (the personified pagan East). He persecutes *two* Maqabean families across 1 Mq and 2 Mq, then is the eschatological foil throughout 3 Mq.
2. **The two Maqabis figures are distinct** — Horovitz 1905 (p. 195) was the first to flag this, distinguishing the "Benjaminite Maqabis" of the First Part (= our 1 Mq, the patriarch of the five martyred sons) from the "moabitischen Stammvater der Maccabäer" of the Second Part (= our 2 Mq, the converted king-protagonist). The distinction was reiterated by Cowley 1974 in his canon survey.

3. **The theological move from 1 Mq to 2 Mq is from Israelite martyrology to Gentile conversion** — a remarkable broadening of the salvation horizon. The blessed dead in 1 Mq are Israelites; in 2 Mq they are *the sons of a converted Moabite*. This represents an EOTC-distinctive universalism, paralleling the ecclesiastical self-image of the Aksumite-Christian kingdom as a Gentile nation grafted into the covenant of Abraham.

The book has 21 chapters and roughly 426 verses. Style and translation conventions follow those established for 1 Mq.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The opening chapter of 2 Meqabyan recounts the destruction of Jerusalem by Maqabis-of-Moab and his coalition. The scene is gruesome: from the Jabbok river to Jerusalem, Jewish settlements are razed; the holy city is sacked; the corpses of the righteous are left for beasts and birds (a direct citation of **Psalm 79:2–3**); pregnant women are ripped open (the classic biblical war-atrocity formula, cf. 2 Kings 8:12; Hos. 13:16). The Moabite king and his allies return home rejoicing with plunder. The chapter operates as a parallel-inverse of 1 Mq Ch. 1: where 1 Mq's tyrant was Chaldean (Ṣiruṣaydan), here the tyrant is Moabite; where there it was Israel's defenders who were endangered, here it is Israel itself that is destroyed.

The chapter establishes Maqabis-of-Moab as the principal protagonist of 2 Mq — but begins his arc at the moral nadir.

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1 This is the book that tells how **Maqabis** found the Jews in Syria between the two rivers; how, from the Jabbok all the way to the square of Jerusalem, he slaughtered them in their valleys; and how he destroyed the holy city.

2 From Samaria as far as the square of Jerusalem, even to all her districts they encamped; with the sword they killed, leaving few survivors. For the Edomites and the Syrians and the Amalekites had made common cause with **Maqabis the man of Moab**, the destroyer of the city of Jerusalem.

3 When the sons of Israel transgressed, [God] raised against them **Maqabis the Moabite**; and he killed them all with the sword.

4 Therefore the enemies of God grew arrogant against the holy city; in their iniquity they made common cause.

5 Edomites and Philistines also encamped [there]; for he [God] had sent them, since they had challenged the word of God; they began to take vengeance on the city of God.

6 That Maqabis's country was **Remat of Moab**; with strength he arose from his country, and with all the men who were with him he made common cause.

> *Note on 2 Mq 1:6:* የሞዓብ ሬማት (*Remat of Moab*) is the named home of Maqabis-of-Moab. **Remat** does not directly correspond to a well-known Moabite city — possibly an Ethiopianized form of **Ramoth** (cf. Ramoth-Gilead, frequently in 1 Kings 22 / 2 Kings 8–9 but situated in Transjordan, not Moab proper); or possibly an otherwise-unattested Moabite toponym. Confidence: **medium**.

7 That they might destroy the city of God, they encamped in **Mesopotamia** and the valleys of Galaboh as far as Syria; there he sought out the Philistines and the Amalekites; and he gave them much gold and silver, horses and chariots, that they might be one with him in iniquity.

8 And coming together, they overthrew her fortress; the inhabitants of her shed blood like water.

9 They made Jerusalem like the hut of a vineyard-keeper; they raised a din within her; he [Maqabis] did every wicked work that God does not love; they defiled the city of God which was full of righteousness and holiness.

10 *“They made the corpses of your servants food for the birds of heaven. They made the flesh of your righteous ones food for the wild beasts of the desert.”*

> *Note on 2 Mq 1:10:* Direct quotation of **Psalm 79:2–3** (*“the dead bodies of your servants have they given to be food for the birds of the heaven, the flesh of your saints to the beasts of the earth”*) — a psalm sung specifically about the destruction of Jerusalem and the desecration of the Temple. The quotation locates the present narrative theologically in the post-586-BCE “lament-over-Jerusalem” tradition.

11 They plundered widows and orphans; what Satan had taught them, they did, without fearing God; until God who searches the kidneys and the heart became angry, **they ripped out the fetuses in the wombs of pregnant women.**

> *Note on 2 Mq 1:11:* The ripping-of-fetuses atrocity is the most extreme biblical war-crime formula: cf. **2 Kings 8:12** (Hazael’s prophesied atrocities), **2 Kings 15:16** (Menahem at Tiphsah), **Amos 1:13** (the Ammonites at Gilead), **Hosea 13:16** (Samaria). The motif of *“God who searches the kidneys and the heart”* (1 Mq 2:22, 6:18; Ps 7:9; Jer 11:20) is recycled here to mark the absolute moral limit being crossed by Maqabis’s army.

12 Because they had done evil to the people of God, they returned to their country rejoicing; they took the plunder they had captured from the holy city.

13 And when they returned and entered their houses, they made joy, song, and clapping.

Chapter 2

Introduction

Chapter 2 is the **prophetic-confrontation chapter** — the second movement of Maqabis-of-Moab’s narrative arc. The prophet **Re’ay** (ረእይ, literally “Seer/Vision”) arrives at his court and pronounces a graphically corporeal scourge: heart-disease, eczema, gout (v. 4). The threats parallel the **Deuteronomy 28** covenant-curse catalog. Maqabis responds with sackcloth, dust on his head, and weeping — the textbook penitential response (cf. Jonah 3:6 of the king of Nineveh; Esther 4:1 of Mordecai). The chapter closes with his confession before God.

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1 The prophet whom they call **Re’ay** said to him: *“Be glad a little today, while it is yet morning; for the Holy One of Israel, the LORD, shall avenge himself against you with a scourge you did not expect.*

> *Note on 2 Mq 2:1:* The prophet’s name ረእይ (*Re’ay*) literally means “vision” or “seeing” — it may function as a proper name or as a title (“the Seer,” cf. 1 Sam 9:9, *“he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer”*). The Geʿez phrasing ረእይ የሚሉት ነቢይ (*“the prophet whom they call Re’ay”*) is itself ambiguous between “the prophet whose name is Re’ay” and “the prophet called ‘the Seer.’ ” We retain *Re’ay* as a proper name throughout, but the reader should know that this is essentially a generic seer-figure.

2 *“Will you say, ‘Horses are swift, therefore by running I will escape’?*

3 *“I say to you: the men who pursue you are swifter than carrion-birds; from destruction and the wrath of God which comes upon you, you shall not escape.*

4 *“Will you say, ‘I will put on armor of iron; the casting of spears and the shooting of arrows cannot touch me’? The Holy One of Israel, the LORD, says: ‘It is not by the casting of spears that I will avenge myself against you’; but worse than the casting of spears and the shooting of arrows, I will bring upon you grievous heart-disease, eczema, and gout.*

> *Note on 2 Mq 2:4:* The disease-catalog — heart-disease, እከክ (eczema/itching), ቍርጥማት (gout/joint-pain) — draws on the **Deuteronomy 28:27–35** covenant-curse list (*“the LORD shall*

smite you with the boil of Egypt, and with the hemorrhoids, and with the scab, and with the itch, of which you cannot be healed… he shall smite you in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed"). The threat is calibrated as worse than the warrior's death-by-arrow that Maqabis fears — slow, humiliating, public.

5 *"For you have stirred my anger; I will bring heart-disease upon you; you shall lack a helper; until I have destroyed the calling of your name from the earth, you shall not escape my hand.*

6 *"Because you have stiffened your neck, because you have exalted your head over my city — when in the blink of an eye I do this thing swiftly, you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Creator. For before me you are like grass before the wind which fire devours; before me you are like dust which the whirlwind takes from the earth and scatters.*

7 *"You have stirred my anger; you have not known your Creator. I will disregard all that is yours; in every fortress of yours that takes refuge, I will leave nothing.*

8 *"Now turn from all the wickedness you have done. If you turn — if you confess before God utterly with weeping and sorrow, if you petition him with a pure heart — God will forgive you all the sin you have committed before him."*

9 Then Maqabis, clothed in dust, wept before God for his sin; for God had been angry with him.

10 And he knew that God would not delay the scourge the prophet had spoken in God's name. For God's eyes are open and he does not sleep; his ears are open and he does not disregard; the word he has spoken he does not make false; in one blink of an eye he does it swiftly.

11 He cast off his garments and put on sackcloth; he scattered dust on his head; for the wickedness he had done, he cried out before his Creator God; he wept.

Chapter 3

Introduction

Chapter 3 is the **conversion chapter** — and contains one of the most distinctive penitential images in Ethiopian biblical literature: **Maqabis digs a pit and enters it up to his neck** (v. 2), weeping in extreme self-mortification. God responds through the prophet with a long forgiveness-speech (vv. 3–10), including a direct citation of **Exodus 20:5–6** (the third-and-fourth-generation/thousandth-generation formula, v. 9). Maqabis emerges from the pit (v. 11), confesses, prostrates himself at the prophet's feet, and is raised. He then conducts a thorough religious reform of his household — removing idols, sorcerers, and diviners (v. 16) — and, in the most extraordinary detail, **learns Torah from the Jewish captive children he had brought from Jerusalem** (vv. 17–19). The closing section (vv. 22–29) is a meditation on the cyclical pattern of Israel's sin and deliverance, framing Maqabis's conversion as a return to the pattern.

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1 Remat of Moab is near Syria; the prophet spoke to him.

2 He dug a pit and entered it up to his neck; he wept a bitter weeping; he repented before God for the sin he had committed.

Note on 2 Mq 3:2: The pit-up-to-the-neck penance is unique to Meqabyan and one of the most striking ascetic images in Geʿez biblical literature. The closest canonical parallel is **Jonah 3:5–6** (the king of Nineveh in sackcloth and ash), but Meqabyan intensifies the image: literal immersion in the earth. The image may also draw on the burial-imagery of the resurrection chapters of 1 Mq (Chs. 7–8): Maqabis is, in effect, "burying himself alive" to be raised in righteousness — a kind of baptismal symbolic anticipation. The Ethiopian *kidan* (covenant) tradition records similar penitential gestures in the desert-monasticism literature.

3 And God said to the prophet: *"Return from the land of Judah to Remat, to Maqabis the chief of Moab. Say to him: God says thus: 'It was I, the LORD your Creator, who in my will sent you that you might destroy my city — not lest you say,"By my own might and the firmness of my army I destroyed the holy city." It was not you who did this thing;*

4 *"for in all her covetousness, in her denial and her lechery, she grieved me.*

5 *"And I disregarded her; into your hand I delivered her. Not for your sake, lest you stiffen your neck and say,"I encompassed the city with the strength of my own hand." But now, for the sake of the children whom you have begotten, God forgives you your sin.*

6 *"Now, with all your heart, take courage and repent. Those who waver do not take courage to repent; do not be a waverer.*

7 *"But those who repent with all their mind, who in everything they have repented of do not return to perversity and sin — they are blessed.*

8 *"And those who take courage, with weeping and sorrow, with much petition and prostration, to return to their Creator God — they are blessed. For he has said: 'You who have repented after you erred — you who have repented are mine.'*

9 *"To the proud one who has erred — when he has turned back in repentance — he says: 'For your fear and your terror, I forgive you your sin.' For I am the LORD your Creator, who bring the sin of the father upon the children to the third and fourth generation, but to those who love me and keep my law, I show mercy to the thousandth generation. [Ex 20:5–6 / Deut 5:9–10]*

10 *"Now, for the children you have begotten, I will keep my covenant with you; for the sin you have done, I will accept the repentance you have made — so says God Almighty, the Holy One of Israel.'"*

11 Then he came up out of the pit, saying: *"I have grieved God! Do as you please to me; but let me not be separated from you. May God do thus and more to me!"* — and he prostrated himself before the prophet. "*We had no law; we did not walk in his commandments as our fathers did; as our fathers taught us, we worshiped the idol; you know.*

12 *"I am a sinner who has walked in my sin and the pride of my heart; in the stiffness of my neck I have grieved my Creator. Until now I have not heard the words of God's prophets; in his law and commandments which he commanded me, I have not lived."*

13 And the prophet answered: *"Before you, no one from your people has confessed his sin; today I have known that he has accepted your repentance."*

14 *"From now on, leave off worshiping idols; turn to the knowledge of God, that your conversion may be true."* And he prostrated himself at the prophet's feet; the prophet raised him; he commanded him all the good works that were fitting.

15 And he did as God had commanded; he returned to his house.

16 That Maqabis put his mind in order. From his house he removed the idol and the divination, the idol-worshipers and the diviners, the sorcerers.

17 And the children he had brought from Jerusalem as captives — morning and evening he examined them, whether, as their fathers used to do, they kept all the commandments of God, his ordinances and his law.

18 From the captive children, from the educated, he appointed [them] over his house.

19 Furthermore — that they might teach his small, well-loved younger children all that the sons of Israel do (the law of God) — he appointed educated ones from among the smaller [captives] to enter his bedchamber; he heard from the captive children all the ordinances of God, his worship and judgment, and all the customs the Moabites practiced.

> *Note on 2 Mq 3:17–19:* This is the **most distinctive feature of the conversion narrative**: Maqabis becomes a student of Torah at the feet of the Jewish children he had taken captive. The role-reversal — captor becomes pupil, captives become teachers — is theologically charged.

The closest scriptural parallel is **2 Kings 5** (Naaman the Syrian healed by Elisha through the witness of his captive Hebrew maidservant); the structural reversal is identical.

20 Their shrines, their divinations and their idols, the kid-goats and ewe-lambs they fattened morning and evening, the sacrifice and wine they offered to the idols — these he destroyed.

21 At noon and at every hour, in all his work, he used to bow and worship them [the idols]; he used to petition them and trust them; even on returning from a journey, he used to petition them; the priests of the idols, in everything they told him, he used to do their will.

22 It seemed to him that in everything they saved him; therefore he did not despise anything they spoke.

23 But now that Maqabis left their way.

24 After he had heard the words of the seer whom they called a prophet, he made his way straight in repentance. In those days, all his people made their way straighter than the sons of Israel — for the sons of Israel grieved him from time to time, and when he scourged them, they came to know him; they cried out to God.

25 When they were seized by the heathen who afflicted them, and they were humbled, and they cried out to him — when he heard, he remembered the oath to their fathers; at that time, for the sake of their fathers Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, he forgave them.

26 But when he saved them, they would forget him who had saved them; they would return to worshiping idols.

27 Then he would raise the heathen who afflicted them with affliction; and when they afflicted and grieved them, they cried to God; then in pity he forgave them, for they were the creatures of his hand; he loved them.

28 Furthermore, even when he was guarding them, they returned to grieving him — worshiping the idols around them and the evil work of their hand.

29 And he used to raise against them the people of the Philistines and Moabites, of Midian and Syria, of Egypt; when their enemies defeated them, when they afflicted them and made them tributary, when they ruled them — they would cry and weep; when God willed, he would raise judges to save them; and the judges would save them.

Chapter 4

Introduction

Chapter 4 is the **judge-pattern + Maqabis-as-righteous-king chapter**. It opens with a compressed catalog of the deliverer-judges — Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Barak, Deborah, Judith (vv. 1–3) — paralleling the salvation-history retelling of 1 Mq Ch. 28. Then (vv. 10–32) it describes Maqabis-of-Moab's full conversion-life: his observance of Jewish law (including dietary law!), tithing, sacrifices toward Jerusalem, his construction of Tabernacle-style furnishings (lampstand, table, veils, vessels, ring-rods, pure oil), his governance of his Moabite subjects in righteousness, his defeat of the Philistines/Amalekites/Syrians who once defeated him, and his death "in good" (i.e. in a state of peace, as a righteous man).

This chapter is the **theological climax of 2 Meqabyan** — the longest portrait of a Gentile convert to Mosaic religion in the entire Ethiopian biblical canon.

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1 There was a time he saved them by **Joshua**.

2 There was a time he saved them by **Gideon**.

3 There was a time he saved them by **Samson**, by **Barak and Deborah**, and by **Judith**; for, whether through woman or man, dwelling in [the deliverer] — he raised judges to save them from the hand of the enemies who tortured them.

4 And God, as he willed, used to save them from the hand of those who tortured them.

5 In all the good he did for them — by multiplying the seed of their land, all the flock of their wilderness, and their cattle — he gladdened them.

6 He used to bless their cattle and their plantings; in house and in wilderness, all they took hold of he used to bless; he looked upon them with the eye of mercy; he did not diminish their livestock; for they were the children of the righteous, and he loved them utterly.

7 But when they did evil in their work, into the hand of their enemies he delivered them up.

8 When he destroyed them, at once they sought him; turning back, they ran to their Creator God.

9 When they turned with their whole mind, he forgave their sin. For he knows they are flesh and blood; the deceiving thought of this world and the demons are upon them; their former sin he did not remember against them.

10 Now that Maqabis, when he heard this ordinance which God had made on the holy mountain, strove in repentance.

11 After he had seen this thing and heard it, he did not slacken in doing good works. Because God had forgiven them, he did not slacken in doing all the kindness the sons of Israel do; when they transgressed his commandment, when God scourged them — they wept and cried out; and again he forgave them; they kept his law.

12 And Maqabis made his way straight likewise; he kept his commandment; he walked in the commandment of the LORD God of Israel.

13 Then, hearing all those in whom the sons of Israel trusted, he came to trust as they did — by keeping the commandment of God.

14 His house and his children he urged to walk in all the law and commandment of God.

15 What the Jews were forbidden by ordinance, he too forbade himself; the commandment the Jews kept, he heard and kept. Though he was of distinct Moabite stock, he refrained from the foods the Jews were forbidden.

> *Note on 2 Mq 4:15:* The most striking detail in the conversion narrative: a Moabite king **adopting Jewish dietary law**. The structural parallel in scripture is **Ruth the Moabite** (Ruth 1:16: *"Whither thou goest, I will go… thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God"*) — extended here to a male royal figure who institutes the conversion at the level of his entire household. Rabbinic developments of Ruth-as-paradigmatic-Gentile-convert: **Ruth Rabbah 2:9** (treating Ruth's conversion as the paradigm for the righteous Gentile) and **Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Ruth 1:16** (with explicit conversion-formula expansion). The phrase **"of distinct Moabite stock"** (ልዩ ሞዓባዊ ወገን) is the narrator's flag that Maqabis is a *Gentile-born* convert, not someone of Israelite descent.

16 He set aside the tithe; from his sheep and his cows, from his donkeys, the firstborn and all he had purchased he used to give; even as the Jews offered sacrifice, with his face turned toward Jerusalem, he offered sacrifice.

> *Note on 2 Mq 4:16:* **Facing Jerusalem to pray and sacrifice** is the standard Second-Temple-Jewish and EOTC liturgical posture (cf. Dan 6:10; 1 Kings 8:30, 38, 44 — Solomon's prayer that those in exile pray facing the Temple). Maqabis adopts this in his Moabite home.

17 The sacrifice of his vow and of his sin, of his will and of his peace, and the perpetual sacrifice — he offered.

> *Note on 2 Mq 4:17:* The sacrifice-types named (vow-offering, sin-offering, peace-offering, perpetual/daily offering) directly correspond to **Leviticus 1–7**: ʿolah (burnt-offering), ḥattaʾat

(sin-offering), shelamim (peace-offering), tamid (perpetual offering). Maqabis is operating the full Levitical sacrificial system.

18 He gave the first of his harvest; the wine-offering the Jews offered, he too offered; he gave it to the Levite he had appointed; all that the Jews did, he did likewise; he made the incense fragrant.

19 Candlesticks and vessels, tables and tent-curtains, the four colors and rings, the pure oil for the lampstand of the Holy of Holies — when Israel served God in the Holy of Holies — and the curtain, he had made.

Note on 2 Mq 4:19: The list — **lampstand, vessels, tables, tent-curtains, four-color hangings, rings, pure oil, veil** — is drawn directly from **Exodus 25–27** (the Tabernacle specifications). The Moabite king is establishing in his own land a full Tabernacle-style worship space. The "four colors" refers to the **scarlet, purple, blue, and fine-linen** of Ex 26:1 / 36:8.

20 When [the Jews] lived in his law and ordinance, when God did not disregard them and deliver them into the hand of their enemies — Maqabis also did good works in all his ways.

21 That [God] might be a leader to him, that he might not separate him from the people of Israel whom he had chosen and whose will he did — he always prayed to the Creator of Israel.

22 That he might be given **a son in Zion**, **a house in Jerusalem**, and that he might be saved from the destruction the prophet had spoken — that all his repentance and the weeping he had wept before God might be received as his repentance —

23 that his seed might not be destroyed from the earth, that he might be kept in his going-out and his coming-in — he prayed again.

24 The Moabite peoples under Maqabis's authority were pleased to believe; for their chief walked in a straight way, and they saw his judgment; they did his will; for they had despised the judgment and the language of their own country, and they observed that Maqabis's work was straight and better.

25 And they came to him; they heard the mercy and the true judgment of Maqabis.

26 He had much wealth: male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys; he had five hundred armored horses; he utterly defeated the Philistines, the Amalekites, and the Syrians — whereas formerly, when he had worshiped idols, they had defeated him.

27 But since he had trusted in God, when he went out to battle, it was he who won; there was none who could defeat him.

28 They came against him in the strength of their idols to attack him; in the name of their idols they cursed him; but because he had placed his faith on his Creator God, there was none who could defeat him.

29 Doing this, and defeating his enemies, and ruling the heathen by his authority — he lived.

30 For the wronged he used to avenge; he used to vindicate the cause of the orphan.

31 Widows and orphans in their time of need he used to receive; the hungry he satisfied from his food; the naked he clothed from his garments.

32 In his wisdom and in the work of his hand he was glad; from what he had, without withholding, he used to give; to the temple he gave tithes; and Maqabis, doing this, **rested in good**.

Note on 2 Mq 4:32: The verb ዐረፈ (*ʿarefa*, "rested") is the biblical-Geʿez idiom for the peaceful death of a righteous person (cf. Gen 25:8 of Abraham, *"and Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people"*). The death of the converted Moabite king occurs in the peace of a righteous person, completing his conversion-narrative arc as the EOTC's exemplary Gentile penitent.

Chapter 5

Introduction

Chapter 5 begins the **second martyrdom-cycle of the trilogy**. After Maqabis-of-Moab dies in peace, his small sons grow up keeping his law for five years (vv. 1–3); then **King Ṣiruṣaydan of the Chaldeans** invades and captures them (v. 4). The chapter develops a contrastive portrait of the apostate Chaldeans (vv. 5–9: incestuous, idolatrous, lawless) versus the surviving sons of Maqabis (v. 10: faithful to their father's commandments, keeping the Mosaic dietary laws). Verses 12–18 introduce the idol **Ba'al Pe'or** with the standard idol-impotence litany (does not eat, drink, kill, save, plant, uproot, do good, do evil, impoverish, honor, scourge, forgive).

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1 He died, leaving his small sons; and they grew up as their father had ordained for them; they kept the ordinances of their house; they kept all their people; the poor, the widows, and the orphans they did not cause to cry out.

2 They feared God; their wealth they gave as alms to the poor; all that their father had committed to them they kept; widows and orphans in their hardship they used to comfort; they used to be father and mother to them; from the hand of those who wronged them they used to deliver them; from any uproar and grief that came upon them they used to comfort them.

3 Doing this, they lived five years.

4 After this, **King Ṣiruṣaydan of the Chaldeans came**, and destroyed all their country, and took the sons of Maqabis captive, and destroyed all their settlements.

> *Note on 2 Mq 5:4:* **Ṣiruṣaydan** is the same villain-king as 1 Mq chs. 1–6: the Chaldean tyrant whose name encodes **Tyre** + **Sidon**. The trilogy is thus unified by a single arch-antagonist: the same king who martyred the five sons of Maqabis-of-Benjamin in 1 Mq now seizes the sons of Maqabis-of-Moab. **Ṣiruṣaydan is the recurring antichrist-figure of the Meqabyan corpus.**

5 He plundered all their wealth; and them — idol-worshipers, who do not walk in the commandment and judgment of God, but in all wickedness and lechery, in defilement and covetousness, in blasphemy and in not considering their God — these took them to their country.

6 They eat the dead and its blood, what the wild beast has eaten and what has rotted, and all that God does not love; they have no law of all the true commandment written in the Torah.

7 God who brought them out of their mother's womb, who fittingly fed them, who is their Creator and Savior — they do not know him.

8 In judgment they have no law; their step-mother and their aunt they marry; and they go to plunder and to evil, to sin and to lechery; every evil they do; their sisters and their kindred they marry; they have no law.

9 All their way is mire and darkness, defilement and lechery.

10 But those **sons of Maqabis** were kept in all their ordinances; they would not eat what had died of itself or been struck by a paw; they would not do all the defilement and sin of the sons of the Chaldeans. For the sons of the heathen — who are not written in this book — sinners and criminals, heretics and deniers, full of utter defilement and plunder — the work they did was evil and abundant.

11 Among them, no work which their Creator God loves was found.

12 Furthermore, they used to worship an idol called **Ba'al Pe'or**; as their Creator God they used to worship and trust him. But he is deaf and dumb; he has neither sight nor hearing; for he is the work of human hands — an idol; a smith working silver and gold has made him; the work of human hands, without breath or knowledge.

> *Note on 2 Mq 5:12:* ብኤል ፈጎር = **Ba'al Pe'or**, the Moabite-Midianite deity of **Numbers 25:1–9** (*"and the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab… and the people joined*

themselves to Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel"). The placement of this Moabite deity as the *Chaldean* idol is geographically anomalous — likely reflecting Meqabyan's tendency to syncretize all pagan deities into a single rejected "idol of the heathen." Alternatively, the verse may be re-using a stock idol-name without geographical precision.

13 He does not eat; he does not drink.

14 He does not kill; he does not save.

15 He does not plant; he does not uproot.

16 He does not do good; he does not do evil.

17 He does not impoverish; he does not honor.

18 He does not scourge; he does not forgive. But to fools — the Chaldean people — he becomes a stumbling-block, leading them astray.

Chapter 6

Introduction

Chapter 6 is the **martyrdom-and-appearance chapter** of 2 Meqabyan — structurally parallel to 1 Mq Chs. 3–4 but compressed. The sons of Maqabis-of-Moab refuse to sacrifice to Ṣiruṣaydan's idols (vv. 6–11); they are burned in fire (v. 13); they then appear to the king at night with drawn swords (v. 14) and preach to him the impotence of his idols and the certainty of his Gehenna-judgment (vv. 16–24). The narrative move replicates 1 Mq 4 exactly — confirming the **shared narrative architecture** in which Ṣiruṣaydan persecutes successive families of righteous-Maqabean martyrs, whether or not this represents common authorship.

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1 That enemy of God, the arrogant **Ṣiruṣaydan**, appointed false priests and servants for his idols.

2 They used to offer sacrifice to them; they used to pour out wine for them.

3 It seemed to him that they ate and drank.

4 Each morning he gave them cows and sheep, goats and heifers; morning and evening he offered sacrifice; from that defiled sacrifice he ate.

5 Furthermore, he stirred up and compelled others to sacrifice to the idols; it was not only he himself who did it.

6 And when the priests of the idols saw the sons of Maqabis — that they were comely and worshiped their Creator God — they desired to lead them astray to sacrifice and to eat of the defiled sacrifice; but those blessed sons of Maqabis refused them.

7 For they kept their father's commandment; in doing good works they stood firm; they utterly feared God. To persuade them to consent was impossible.

8 And when they had bound them, and reviled them, and plundered them,

9 they reported to King Ṣiruṣaydan that they refused to bow down to the idols and to sacrifice.

10 Therefore the king was angry; and grieved; and he commanded that they be brought; they were brought, and stood before him; and he said, *"Bow down to the gods; offer sacrifice."*

11 They answered: *"As for us, we will not turn back to you in this matter; to your defiled idols we will not offer sacrifice."*

12 He frightened them with many tortures; but because they had believed in God and steeled their hearts, he could not overcome them.

13 Then he kindled fire and cast them in; and they gave their souls to God.

14 And after they died, alive once more, holding their drawn swords, they appeared to him by night as he was lying on the throne of his kingdom; and he was utterly afraid.

> *Note on 2 Mq 6:14:* Direct narrative parallel to **1 Mq 4:8** — the post-mortem appearance of the martyrs to Ṣiruṣaydan with drawn swords, in his bedchamber, at night. The exact replication of this scene is the strongest piece of evidence for **the unified composition of 1 Mq and 2 Mq** as paired books with shared narrative architecture.

15 And he said to them: *"Lords, consent to me! What shall I do for you? All you have commanded me, I will do; do not take my soul."* They utterly terrified him.

16 And they said: *"Remember that God is your Creator,"* telling him all that was fitting. *"And there is one who shall remove you from this arrogance and bring you down with your father the Devil to the Gehenna below; there, when we have done you no wrong, while we were worshiping our Creator God, while we were bowing down to him in fear of his Godhead — yet you burned us with fire — you will fulfill all your sentence.*

17 *"For he it is who has created all — heaven and earth, the sea and what is in it,*

18 *"the sun and the moon, the stars, all his creation — he is the LORD.*

19 *"In heaven above and on earth beneath, there is no other God besides him; he is the Almighty; nothing is impossible for him. He kills and saves, scourges and forgives.*

20 *"He rules heaven and earth; there is none who escapes his hand.*

21 *"Except for you, criminal, and the criminals like you whose minds your father Satan has blinded — from all his creation, none transgresses his commandment. You and those idols of yours shall descend together to Gehenna which has no exit forever.*

22 *"It is not you alone who do this; for Satan is your teacher who taught you this evil work, that you might do evil to us.*

23 *"You did not remember God who created you; you make yourself like God your Creator.*

24 *"Until God humbles you, you boast in the work of your hand and in your idols; and for all the sin and iniquity you have done on earth, he will avenge himself against you."*

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Chapter 7

A short chapter (9 verses) closing the post-mortem-appearance scene of Ch. 6. The martyred sons of Maqabis-of-Moab finish their reproach of King Ṣiruṣaydan and vanish (v. 7). Ṣiruṣaydan trembles in fear all night, then goes to find their bodies (intending to bury them) — but God has supernaturally hidden them (v. 9), as Moses's grave was hidden in Deut 34:6.

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1 *"Woe to you and those like you — who do not know God your Creator, who do not keep his commandment and his word! For you are reserved, when you are seized in the affliction of Sheol and scourged, to repent in worthless repentance.*

2 *"To your idols who have neither soul nor breath — who neither avenge those who do evil to them, nor do good to those who do good to them — to whom you and your priests sacrifice and bow down as your Creator God: you have no exit from her [Gehenna] forever.*

3 *“For they are the work of human hands; Satan speaks through them, that he may lead astray the minds of fools like you, that he may bring you and the servants of your gods and the demons who command you down to the fire of Gehenna.*

4 *“You sin and you err; for you do not know that they have no profit for you.*

5 *“Even the cattle and wild beasts and dogs that God created for your food are better than you. For they have no further condemnation beyond one death.*

6 *“But you shall die; and again forever, in Gehenna which has no exit, the grinding [judgment] shall fall upon you.”*

7 Speaking thus, they went away; from him they vanished.

8 But that Ṣiruṣaydan, seized by grievous fear, spent the night trembling; until daybreak it did not leave him.

9 After this, he went to the place where he had cast the bodies of the righteous; but he did not find them. For he had wished to bury them. **But because God had hidden them, that he might not go and touch their bodies, he found them not.**

> *Note on 2 Mq 7:9:* The hidden bodies of the martyrs parallel the **hidden grave of Moses** in **Deuteronomy 34:6** (*“and no man knows of his sepulcher to this day”*), and the **assumed bodies** of Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11). The motif marks the martyrs as supernaturally protected from desecration even after death — a confirmation of their post-mortem reality first established at 6:14.

Chapter 8

Introduction

Chapter 8 (24 verses) is the **hubris-of-Ṣiruṣaydan chapter**. With the martyrs gone, the king resumes his arrogant career. The chapter alludes to the **Danielic four-kingdoms vision** (v. 2: *“as Daniel saw — the strong iron”*), pronounces Ṣiruṣaydan’s claim *“From me the sun rises”* (v. 7) — combining the canonical antichrist-proof-texts of Isa 14, Ezek 28, and 2 Thess 2 — and lists his conquest tour across **Zebulun, Macedonia, Samaria, Syria, the nomads’ districts, Sidon, Achaia, the flowing sea, and India** (vv. 8–9). This geographic catalog is one of the strongest **Roman-era markers in 2 Mq**, since “Macedonia” and “Achaia” are explicitly Roman provincial names. The chapter closes (vv. 23–24) with a retelling of **Joshua 10** (the five Amorite kings, the sun-stood-still at Gibeon).

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1 He went in pride and the cunning of his heart.

2 In his kingdom, **as Daniel saw — the strong iron** — he encompassed the surrounding countries of the heathen.

> *Note on 2 Mq 8:2:* Direct allusion to **Daniel 2:40** (the fourth kingdom of iron, *“strong as iron, since iron breaks in pieces and crushes everything”*). Meqabyan locates Ṣiruṣaydan typologically in the iron-kingdom = the final, crushing empire of Daniel’s schema.

3 In all foolishness and wickedness, in uproar, he lived.

4 What we said before — he breaks, he crushes, he devours.

5 As he had stiffened his neck like his father the Devil, who spits out venom, he tramples the remnant under his feet.

6 He does not know that God is his Creator; rather, he says: *“My days have become like the days of heaven.”*

7 And in his heart he thinks: *“From me the sun rises.”*

> *Note on 2 Mq 8:6–7:* The hubris-speech of Ṣiruṣaydan combines the canonical proof-texts for the antichrist-figure: **Isaiah 14:13–14** (*"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God… I will be like the Most High"*), **Ezekiel 28:2** (*"because your heart is lifted up, and you have said: 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of God' "*), and **2 Thessalonians 2:4** (*"who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god… proclaiming himself to be God"*). The *"the sun rises from me"* line goes beyond the canonical antichrist-formulae to claim cosmogonic supremacy.

8 He rises in might; in the lot of Zebulun he encamps; in **Macedonia** he raises battle; from Samaria he receives his food-tribute; from Syria they give him gifts of homage.

9 In the districts of the nomads he encamps; he reaches as far as Sidon; in **Achaia** he lays tribute; to the flowing sea he exalts his neck; returning, he sends his messages even to the Indian Ocean.

> *Note on 2 Mq 8:8–9:* The geographic catalog — Zebulun, **Macedonia**, Samaria, Syria, Sidon, **Achaia**, the flowing sea, India — is a sweep of the eastern Mediterranean and Indian Ocean trade horizons of Hellenistic-Roman imperial geography. **Achaia** (Roman province established 27 BCE) and **Macedonia** (Roman province from 146 BCE) are explicitly post-classical toponyms. The catalog locates Ṣiruṣaydan rhetorically as a world-emperor in the Greco-Roman political register — one of the clearer Roman-era markers in 2 Mq.

10 So also he exalts his neck up to heaven.

11 In arrogance and wickedness he stands firm; he has no humbling of himself.

12 All his way is to darkness and to mire, to crime and to arrogance, to shedding of blood and to affliction.

13 All his way God hates. As **Sebelyanos** the teacher of plunder and wickedness and sin taught him, so he does; the orphan he makes cry out; for the poor he has no pity.

> *Note on 2 Mq 8:13:* ሰብላኒዮስ (*Sebelyanos*) — the same Beliar/Belial figure as in 1 Mq 17. Here he appears explicitly as the *teacher* of Ṣiruṣaydan, just as Satan is *teacher* of the king's wickedness at 6:22 and *teacher of Adam's deception* at 9:2 below. The recurring "teacher-and-pupil" motif (Satan/Sebelyanos as instructor of human wickedness) is a distinctive Meqabyan theological move.

14 The kings of the heathen he placed in his hand and killed.

15 The captains of the enemies he ruled; many heathen he ruled; as he willed, he made them tributary.

16 He showed no mercy; from the **Sea of Tarshish** to the **Sea of Jericho** there was nothing he did not seize.

> *Note on 2 Mq 8:16:* **Tarshish** is the far-western Mediterranean (cf. Jonah 1:3). **"Sea of Jericho"** is anomalous; possibly the Dead Sea (on whose shore Jericho stands), possibly textual corruption. The merism encompasses the whole biblical-world map from west to east.

17 To the idol he used to bow; the dead-self-dead and its blood, the paw-struck and what had been sacrificed to idols, he used to eat. In all his work, instead of judgment, there was utter wrath and quarrel; there was no judgment. To the heathen under his authority he was a terror; as he willed, he made them tributary.

18 In whatever he did, the fear of God was not before him; in the presence of his Creator God, he lived in cunning.

19 He did not act as one obedient to his Creator. When God in his anger seizes him, the evil he had done to his neighbor — he pays him its recompense.

20 For God has said: *"That I may destroy the calling of their name from this world, I avenge myself; I destroy the proud who do not live in my commandment."* As he destroyed the sinners before him, so in his time he avenges him.

21 The wicked, as they have done evil, receive their recompense.

22 But the doers of good — goodness from God follows them.

23 As **Joshua** destroyed the five kings of Canaan in one day in one cave, so that he might destroy their armies — by his prayer he made the sun stand still at **Gibeon**; for until the army of the Hivites and Canaanites, Perizzites and Hittites, Jebusites was destroyed, the sun stood in the midst of heaven — at one time he killed twenty thousand men; he killed them and bound them foot-and-neck; in the cave he killed them with the sword; he closed it with stones.

> *Note on 2 Mq 8:23:* Direct retelling of **Joshua 10:1–27** — the five kings of the Amorite coalition (Adoni-Zedek of Jerusalem, Hoham of Hebron, Piram of Jarmuth, Japhia of Lachish, Debir of Eglon), the sun-stood-still at Gibeon (Josh 10:12–13), the imprisonment of the five kings in the cave at Makkedah, their execution, and the sealing of the cave with great stones. The five-of-the-seven Canaanite nations is the canonical list of Gen 15:19–21.

24 Such affliction shall reach those who grieve God by their wicked work.

Chapter 9

Introduction

Chapter 9 (27 verses) opens with an apostrophe to the prideful king (vv. 1–8): *“O weak man, you who are not God!”* — naming **Sebelyanos** again as the teacher of Adam’s first sin (v. 2) and so by extension the teacher of all human pride. The middle section (vv. 9–17) develops resurrection-theology, including the precise Geʿez technical term የደይን ትንሣኤ (*deyn tenśaʾe*, “resurrection of judgment”) which is a calque on John 5:29 *anástasis kríseōs*. The closing section (vv. 18–27) lays out the **two-ways doctrine** in detail — the broad way of plunder, bloodshed, and Mosaic-purity transgression versus the narrow way of meekness, prayer, fasting, and dietary purity. The narrow/broad pairing is a direct echo of **Matthew 7:13–14**.

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1 O weak man, you who are not God! Why do you boast? Today you are man; tomorrow you are earth and ashes; in your grave you become worm and rotting.

2 Furthermore — Sheol shall follow you and those who do your work. For your teacher is **Sebelyanos** who, by causing our father Adam to err, brings the sin of the whole world back upon his own head;

3 for, by self-exaltation and the hardening of his heart, he refused to bow down to the work of his Creator.

4 And you, like your teacher, have refused to bow down to your Creator God.

5 You too shall go as those before you went — who did not know God their Creator.

6 As they were avenged for the evil work they did on earth, and as they descended to Sheol —

7 so also you, like them, shall descend to Gehenna.

8 You have stirred his anger. God who gave you authority over **the five kingdoms** — to worship him you have neglected. Do you think you can escape from God’s hand?

> *Note on 2 Mq 9:8:* The reference to *“the five kingdoms”* is unusual. It may compress the geographic catalog of 8:8–9 (Zebulun/Macedonia/Samaria/Syria/Sidon plus Achaia/Sea/India = five major spheres), or it may echo a five-empire schema otherwise unknown. Confidence: **medium-low**.

9 Whether you do his will or not — he searches you. If on earth you make your way straight, God will prosper your way; all on which you lay your hand he will prosper; he will bless you; your ancient enemies and your daily enemies he will subdue to you.

10 In your going-out and your coming-in, in the fruit of your belly, in your flocks and your herds, in the work of your hands that you take in hand, in all your heart imagines, he gladdens you. That you may do thus — that you may work and plant, that you may pull down — authority has been given you from God; all shall obey you.

11 But if you refuse to hear God's word and law, and do not live by his judgment — for all his judgment is truth — there is no escaping from God's hand, just as those before you, the criminals who did not properly worship God or stand firm in his straight judgment, could not.

12 From his presence nothing is hidden; rather, all is utterly revealed before him.

13 It is he who holds the authority of kings; it is he who overturns the thrones of the mighty.

14 It is he who exalts the humbled; it is he who lifts up the fallen.

15 It is he who looses those who are bound; it is he who raises the dead. For from him is the dew of mercy: when he wills, he raises the people whose flesh has decayed and rotted and become as dust.

16 Those who have grieved him by doing evil works he also raises — to **the resurrection of judgment**; he avenges himself against them.

> *Note on 2 Mq 9:15–16:* The **two resurrections** doctrine: the righteous to life, the wicked to *"the resurrection of judgment"* (የደይን ትንሣኤ). Direct echo of **John 5:29** (*"those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment"*) and **Daniel 12:2** (*"some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt"*). The Geʿez compound *deyn tenśaʾe* is a precise calque on the Johannine *anástasis kríseōs* — and is one of the clearer **direct New Testament echoes** in 2 Mq.

17 And on earth he destroys their seed; for they are the ones who broke God's law and his ordinance.

18 For the way of the righteous is harder than the way of the wicked; therefore the wicked do not love to live in the counsel of the righteous.

19 As heaven is far from earth, so is the way of the righteous far from the way of the wicked.

20 For the way of the wicked is the way of plunder and wickedness, of violence and lechery, of covetousness and denial; it is to grow drunken in violence and to seize the wealth of others.

21 It is to run swiftly to shed human blood; to do destruction without benefit; to make the orphan cry out; to eat blood and what is dead-of-itself; **to eat the flesh of the camel and the swine**; to go in to one in childbed and to a woman in her blood not yet purified.

> *Note on 2 Mq 9:21:* The catalog mixes **moral crimes** (bloodshed, oppressing orphans) with **specifically Mosaic ritual transgressions** — eating blood, carrion, **camel-flesh and swine-flesh** (Lev 11:4–7), and intercourse with a postpartum or menstruating woman (Lev 12; 15:19–24). The combination confirms that 2 Mq treats the **full Levitical purity code as binding** on Gentile converts (cf. 4:15; 5:10).

22 All this work of the wicked is the **broad way** and the laid-out snare of Satan, leading to eternal destruction and punishment.

23 But the way of the righteous, which is **narrow and slender** — it is the way that leads to life, to meekness and humility, to love and peace, to fasting and prayer, to the purity of the flesh; the way of keeping oneself from the unprofitable, from eating what has been struck or has died of itself, from going in to another's wife, and from lechery.

> *Note on 2 Mq 9:22–23:* The **broad way / narrow way** is a direct echo of **Matthew 7:13–14** (*"enter through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction… narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life"*). The Geʿez ጠባብና ቀጭን ("narrow and slender") is a precise calque on the Synoptic phrase. Another clear NT-era citation.

24 Sinful people do all this. The righteous keep themselves from all hated work not commanded in the law, from eating impure food, and from all work God does not love.

25 The righteous remove themselves from every way God does not love.

26 And he loves them; from all their afflictions he keeps them as entrusted wealth; he saves them.

27 But the wicked — Satan rules over them; for [the righteous] keep his law and his ordinance and all he loves.

Chapter 10

Introduction

Chapter 10 (28 verses) opens with an apostrophe to the kings (vv. 1–2), then retells the **Balaam-and-Balak** narrative of **Numbers 22–24** (vv. 3–15). Balak son of Zippor of Moab hires the prophet Balaam to curse Israel; God overrides the curse and turns it into blessing. The retelling closes with the Jacobian formula "*those who bless you shall be blessed; those who curse you cursed*" (v. 14, from Num 24:9 / Gen 27:29).

The second half of the chapter (vv. 16–28) is a **destruction-of-Jerusalem** lamentation, including a direct citation of **Micah 3:12 / Jeremiah 26:18** (*"they made Jerusalem like a field"*, v. 19) — describing the standard biblical-prophetic image of Jerusalem reduced to plowed land. The chapter closes (vv. 25–28) with a renewed exhortation to the kings to imitate Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

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1 As for you, kings and princes — do not walk in the path of Satan; but fear God who created you and has kept you until today.

2 Stand firm in the law and commandment of God who rules all.

3 When the sons of Israel came to Amalek to inherit the country of the Hittites and Canaanites and Perizzites, **Balak the son of Zippor**

4 said to **Balaam**: *"He whom you have cursed is cursed; he whom you have blessed is blessed. Come and curse them for me; and I will give you much gold and silver that shall honor you."*

5 And Balaam, hoping for the wage of his divination, came; and Balak son of Zippor showed him the place where the sons of Israel were encamped.

6 He performed his divination; he offered sacrifice; he slaughtered the fattened cows and sheep; he wished to curse the sons of Israel.

7 But God did not wish that he curse them. By his word he turned the curse into a blessing.

8 And he said: *"You are the people God has chosen; you are the dwelling-place of the Beloved who comes from heaven. Let those who bless you be blessed; and those who curse you, cursed."*

> *Note on 2 Mq 10:8:* The wording *"you are the dwelling-place of the Beloved who comes from heaven"* is a Christianized expansion of Balaam's blessing, reading the Numbers oracles messianically (cf. Num 24:17, *"a star shall come forth out of Jacob"* — read in Christian tradition as a messianic prophecy from at least Justin Martyr onward).

9 After he had blessed them before him, Balak son of Zippor was grieved; he was utterly angry; he commanded that he curse them.

10 And Balaam said: *"The people whom God has blessed have come to this country; I will not curse those whom God has blessed."*

11 And Balak son of Zippor said to Balaam: *"I wished that you curse them for me; but you have not cursed them; before me you have utterly blessed them. If you had cursed them for me and had said, 'Give to me,' I would have given you a houseful of gold and silver; but you have utterly blessed them; for me you have done no good; for you I will do no good."*

12 And Balaam said: *"What word God puts in my mouth, that I will speak; for I cannot disregard the word of God or transgress it.*

13 *"As for me, I do not love wealth more than my soul. If I loved wealth, God would be angry with me — that I should not curse the blessed people."*

14 For God had said to their father Jacob: *“Those who bless you shall be blessed; those who curse you, cursed.”* [Num 24:9 / Gen 27:29]

15 Every man who blesses you is blessed; every man who curses you without judgment is cursed. To make God love you, prosper your way and your work.

16 Do not be like those before, who grieved God in their wickedness, and whom he disregarded. Some of them he destroyed with the flood of destruction.

17 Some of them he destroyed by the hand of their enemies. Bringing the wicked enemies who afflicted them, he captured their kings together with their priests and their prophets.

18 They led them into a foreign country they did not know; they utterly led them captive; they scourged them; they destroyed their country.

19 They broke down the wall and rampart of the holy city; **they made Jerusalem like a field.**

> *Note on 2 Mq 10:19:* Direct echo of **Micah 3:12** / **Jeremiah 26:18** — *“Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps.”* One of the most-cited prophetic indictments in Second-Temple Jewish-and-Christian literature.

20 The priests too were taken captive; the law was broken; the warriors fell by the sword.

21 Widows were taken captive; for their dead husbands they did not weep; they had been taken captive; they wept for themselves.

22 Children wept; elders were shamed; they did not show pity to the face of the elder and the grey-haired.

23 To the beautiful, and to those under the law, they showed no pity. All they found in their country they destroyed. When [God] first willed to break down the Temple — because he was angry with his people — they took them captive and led them to a foreign country they did not know.

24 Therefore, when God disregarded the sons of Israel, he made **Jerusalem to be plowed like a field**; for always they grieved their Creator.

25 But he did not destroy them at once in any way; for he has mercy for their fathers’ sake, not for their own. For he loves those who reigned in truth, who lived steadfast in straight law before their Creator: their fathers **Abraham and Isaac and Jacob**.

26 And he appointed them to double honor; in heaven and on earth, they received the two-fold kingdom.

27 So also you kings and princes who live in this passing world — remember your fathers who lived in fitting work, who served God in good conduct, who inherited the kingdom of heaven, whose name has become beautiful from generation to generation.

28 So also, that he may straighten your kingdom, that he may make your name good — make your work straight, like the good kings who served God in good conduct before you.

Chapter 11

Introduction

Chapter 11 (25 verses) is the **Moses-and-Korah chapter**, retelling **Numbers 12** (Moses interceding for Aaron and Miriam, vv. 1–4), **Numbers 16** (Korah’s rebellion, his sons swallowed by the earth, and the 250 men consumed by fire, vv. 6–11), and the consequent construction of the **Tabernacle furnishings** (the mercy-seat, cherubim, “the sea,” fine linen, curtain, altar — vv. 12–15). The chapter closes (vv. 17–25) with a typological transition: the same God of Moses and Aaron continues through Samuel and Elijah, dwelling first in the Tabernacle, then in the Temple at Jerusalem; the rebellious of every era share the fate of Korah.

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1 Remember **Moses** the man of God! In his prayer and his meekness, while he kept all this people, he was not vexed; he did not destroy them. But for his brother and his sister — when God had wished to destroy them at once — in his meekness he interceded before God for their sin thus: *“O Lord, your people have transgressed before you; forgive your people; do not disregard them.*

2 *“Forgive me, your servant who am a sinner — for I too have transgressed before you. For you are merciful and forgiving; forgive also for them.”*

> *Note on 2 Mq 11:1–2:* The episode is **Numbers 12** (Aaron and Miriam speak against Moses; Miriam is struck with leprosy; Moses prays: *“O God, heal her, I pray!”* — Num 12:13). The Geʿez ለወንድሙና ለእኅቱ (“for his brother and his sister”) names both Aaron and Miriam, though only Miriam was leprous in the canonical text.

3 And so Moses interceded for his kin.

4 Therefore he was called the meek.

> *Note on 2 Mq 11:4:* Direct echo of **Numbers 12:3** (*“the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth”*) — the canonical etiology of Moses’s defining epithet.

5 And God loved him utterly above all his brothers, the sons of the Levites; for he appointed the priests; among them, he made him as God.

> *Note on 2 Mq 11:5:* Direct allusion to **Exodus 4:16; 7:1** (God to Moses: *“I have made you as God to Pharaoh”*).

6 But the rebellious **sons of Korah** — he made the earth swallow them up; while still alive in flesh and soul, with their cattle and tents, he brought them down to Sheol. For [Moses] had loved his Creator God; he had not gone out from his commandment; every word he spoke was done for him as the word of God.

> *Note on 2 Mq 11:6:* Direct retelling of **Numbers 16:31–33** — Korah’s rebellion; the ground splits open and swallows Korah, Dathan, and Abiram with their families and possessions. The Meqabyan text says *“with their cattle and tents,”* matching Num 16:32 LXX/Vulgate.

7 So also, if you do not transgress the commandment of God, God will do your will; he will love your word; he will keep your kingdom.

8 The **sons of Korah and Asaph** who went out from the commandment of Moses — when he said to them, *“Make your hearts straight to God,”* they murmured against him.

> *Note on 2 Mq 11:8:* The mention of **the sons of Asaph** as among the rebels is anomalous — Asaph is the canonical psalm-author and Levitical singer (1 Chr 6:39; 16:5), and is **not** placed within the Korah rebellion in any canonical source. Possibly a textual error; possibly an EOTC-distinctive tradition. Confidence: **medium-low**.

9 *“Are not we the sons of Levi,”* they said, *“who serve in the priest’s office in the tent of testimony?”*

10 They took their censers to offer incense; they went and offered incense; but God did not receive their prayer; with their censers they burned in fire; they melted like wax melts in fire; not one man of them remained. For he said: *“Their censers have been honored by the burning of their bodies.”* Therefore, by God’s commandment, they went into the dwelling of God; their clothes and their bones did not remain.

> *Note on 2 Mq 11:10:* Direct retelling of **Numbers 16:35–40** — the 250 men of Korah’s faction, with censers in hand, consumed by fire from the LORD; their censers afterward beaten into plates as a covering for the altar, *“to be a memorial unto the children of Israel”* (Num 16:38–40).

11 Therefore God said to Moses and Aaron: *“Gather their censers into the tent; for the vessel of my house, which I have prepared from outside to inside, let it be.”*

12 He prepared the vessels of the holy tent: the **mercy-seat** and its ring, the image of the **cherubim**, and **the sea**.

13 The fine linen and the curtain, the bolts and the surround-girdle of the tent, the vessels and the altar on which sacrifice was offered in the tent of testimony, he made.

> *Note on 2 Mq 11:12–13:* The Tabernacle furnishings — mercy-seat (Ex 25:17), cherubim (Ex 25:18–22), *"the sea"* (the bronze laver of Ex 30:18, or the molten sea of 1 Kings 7:23), fine linen, curtain, bolts, surround-girdle, vessels, altar — mix Tabernacle (Ex 25–27, 30) and Solomonic Temple (1 Kings 7) elements. The "sea" properly belongs to Solomon's Temple.

14 They offered the freewill-offering and the peace-offering, the vow-offering and the sin-offering, the evening and the morning sacrifice.

15 They commanded all that he commanded Moses in the tent of testimony, to do its work.

16 They did not despise obeying their God — that his name might be praised in them within the dwelling-tent of their Creator God's law — [who is the one] who brings forth milk and honey, who swore to Abraham, who promised to give them their fathers' inheritance.

17 To Isaac he swore; for Jacob he established the worship.

18 For Moses and Aaron, he established it in the tent of testimony,

19 for **Samuel and Elijah** he established the worship, until — in the tent at Jerusalem and in the Temple Solomon built — it became the dwelling of God, the resting-place of the name of the Most High, the dwelling of the Holy One of Israel.

20 For [the tent] is the place of petition that is revealed for the meek priests, the place of atonement for sin.

21 It is the place where the petition of those who do his will is heard.

22 For there the law of the Holy One of Israel, the LORD, is performed.

23 For there sacrifice is offered as a sweet savor to the Holy One of Israel, the LORD; there incense is burned.

24 And in the tent of testimony, on the mercy-seat where he forgives, he used to speak. To the chosen sons of Jacob, to his saints who lived steadfast in God's law and commandment, his light used to be revealed.

25 But those who contend [against him] become like the sons of Korah whom the earth swallowed up; so also, sinners shall enter the fire of Gehenna which has no exit forever.

Chapter 12

Introduction

Chapter 12 (15 verses) is the **climactic death of Ṣiruṣaydan** — the narrative end of the trilogy's principal villain-arc that has run from 1 Mq 1:1 through 2 Mq 12:15. The chapter opens with the standard woe-to-Israel-mighty introduction (vv. 1–8), then turns abruptly (vv. 11–13) to the king. In the manner of **Herod Agrippa I at Acts 12:21–23** and **Lucifer at Isaiah 14:13–15**, Ṣiruṣaydan exalts himself with the words *"My days have become like the days of heaven. I am the one who brings forth the sun. Until forever, I shall not die"* — and immediately an angel of death named **Ṭelmiyakos** descends and strikes his heart (v. 13). On the same day, the army of a rival Chaldean king (which had been encamped outside his city awaiting an opportunity) enters and plunders his country, burning his city to ash.

This is the **narrative climax of the Ṣiruṣaydan arc**, which spans 1 Mq Ch. 1 through 2 Mq Ch. 12 — the most extended sustained-villain narrative in the Meqabyan corpus.

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1 Woe to you, mighty of Israel, who have not kept what [God] commanded you in the tent, who have done his will except by your own will! And this is — pride and arrogance, lechery and covetousness, drunkenness and drink, swearing in falsehood.

2 Therefore my wrath shall burn upon you like the chaff before fire; like the fire that consumes the mountain; like the whirlwind that takes the powdered dust from the earth and scatters it to the heavens so that no trace of its work is found —

3 so I will destroy all who work wickedness, says the Holy One of Israel, the LORD. Remember the LORD who rules all; nothing is impossible for him.

4 Those who love him, he loves; those who walk in his commandment — their transgression and sin he forgives. Do not be deaf in unbelief and dull of heart.

5 Make your minds straight toward God; trust in him that you may save your souls; on the day of your affliction I will save you from the hand of your enemies.

6 *“And when you call on me, behold I say: I am with you. From the hand of your enemies I will save you; because you have trusted in me, because you have done my commandment, because you have not gone out from my law, because you have loved what I love — on the day of your affliction I will not disregard you,”* says the LORD who rules all.

7 Those who love him, he loves; for he is compassionate and forgiving; those who keep his commandment, he keeps.

8 Many times he turns his wrath from them; because he knows they are flesh and blood, he is forgiving; in all his scourging he does not destroy. When their soul is separated from their flesh, they return to their earth-nature.

9 For from non-existence he created them; until God wills again to bring them from non-existence, they do not know the place where they shall dwell; for he has taken their soul; the earth-nature he has returned to its earth-nature.

10 Again, by his will, he brings them from non-existence into existence.

11 But **Ṣiruṣaydan**, the denier of God, multiplied arrogance before God’s face; until the day [God] willed [his end] — when [God] forsook him — he exalted himself.

12 And he said: ***“My days have become like the days of heaven. I am the one who brings forth the sun. Until forever, I shall not die.”***

13 And before he had finished speaking this thing, **an angel of death whose name is Ṭelmiyakos descended and struck his heart; in that very hour he died.** He had not praised his Creator; through the abundance of his arrogance and the wickedness of his work, he was separated from his beautiful life and perished.

> *Note on 2 Mq 12:11–13:* **The death of Ṣiruṣaydan** — the climactic narrative event of the trilogy. The hubris-speech of v. 12 directly mirrors **Acts 12:21–23** (Herod Agrippa I declared a god, struck by an angel of the Lord, eaten by worms) and the mythological pattern of the **king-who-claims-divinity-and-is-struck-down** (Isa 14:13–15; Ezek 28:1–10). The angel’s name ጥልሚያኮስ (*Ṭelmiyakos*) is unattested elsewhere in Geʿez literature known to the translator. The form has Greek personal-name suffix (*-iakos*); it may be a transliteration of a Greek angelological name, possibly cognate to Greek *tartarúchos* (“keeper of Tartarus”) or to a name in the *Apocalypse of Paul* tradition. Confidence on the form: **medium-low**.

14 And the army of the king of the Chaldeans, which had wished to fight him — when it was encamped outside his city and the square of his country — at his death, came out and destroyed his country; they plundered all his cattle; up to the wall they left no man.

15 They plundered all his wealth; they took his utensils; they burned his city with fire and returned to their country.

> *Note on 2 Mq 12:14–15:* The narrative completes the talion: as Ṣiruṣaydan had destroyed cities and led peoples captive (1 Mq 1:5–6; 2 Mq 5:4–5), so his own city is destroyed and plundered by another Chaldean army on the very day of his death. **This is the end of the Ṣiruṣaydan-arc** that has run from 1 Mq Ch. 1 to 2 Mq Ch. 12 — across 30+ chapters of the trilogy.

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Chapter 13

Introduction

Chapter 13 is the **martyr-homily chapter** — reflective meditation on the deaths of the sons of Maqabis-of-Moab in Ch. 6. Critically, **verse 1 names them as "the five sons of Maqabis"** — exactly mirroring the five sons of Maqabis-of-Benjamin in 1 Mq Ch. 3. This number-symmetry is decisive evidence that **1 and 2 Meqabyan are a unified composition**: two parallel martyrologies, two Maqabean families, each with five sons, each persecuted by the same Ṣirusaydan. The chapter ends with the apocalyptic-glory formula *"their faces shall shine seven times brighter than the sun"* (v. 14) — a direct echo of Matt 13:43 and Dan 12:3.

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1 And those who believed — **the five sons of Maqabis** — refusing to eat the sacrifice offered to the idol, gave their bodies up to death.

> *Note on 2 Mq 13:1:* The mention of **"the five sons of Maqabis"** is the structural-parallel confirmation. In 1 Mq Ch. 3, the five sons of Maqabis-**of-Benjamin** are martyred by Ṣirusaydan in a fiery furnace; here in 2 Mq Ch. 6, the five sons of Maqabis-**of-Moab** are martyred by the same Ṣirusaydan, also by fire. **The two Maqabean families are exact narrative mirrors** — distinct in ethnic origin (Benjamin/Moab) but identical in number of sons, mode of death, and posthumous appearance to the king. This symmetry is **decisive evidence that 1 and 2 Mq are a unified composition**.

2 Knowing that this world grows old and passes, that pleasure does not abide forever — that they might be saved from the fire in heaven, they gave their bodies to fire.

3 For they knew that to challenge God is worse than to challenge man; that the wrath of God is worse than the wrath of a king.

4 *"O Lord, one day's gladness in Paradise is better than many years' life on earth; better is one hour of your forgiveness than many years.*

5 *"What are our days as men? Are they not as a passing shadow — like wax beside fire?*

6 *"But you, O Lord, abide forever; your years are not fulfilled; the calling of your name is from generation to generation."*

7 And the sons of Maqabis sang this and the like; they chose to trust in God; they refused to eat the defiled sacrifice;

8 therefore, knowing that the dead rise and that after the resurrection judgment shall be pronounced, for the sake of God they gave their bodies to martyrdom.

9 O people who do not know and do not believe the resurrection of the dead — from these five men, who in their brotherly love gave their bodies up together to death, knowing that their later life is better than this passing earthly life — learn!

10 Knowing that all things pass, and because they trusted in him, and did not bow to the idol, and did not eat the dead-of-itself or defiled sacrifice — they gave their bodies up to death, that they might receive praise from God.

11 Having wives and children, they did not regard the sweetness of this world or the bitterness of death; knowing that on the last day they will be glad in soul and body, knowing that on the last day the resurrection in soul and body will be done, they gave their bodies up to death.

12 Those who kept the ordinance of God — knowing that in the world to come, where there is no sickness or sorrow or death, they shall reign with the good kings and princes who believed God's word for generation upon generation and for long ages —

13 seeing in their hearts what is yet to be, in the midst of the fire as wax they gave their bodies up to death.

14 Hoping that **their faces shall shine seven times brighter than the sun**, that when all are raised in soul and body they shall be glad in his love — they gave their bodies up to death.

> *Note on 2 Mq 13:14:* The "seven times brighter than the sun" formula echoes **Matthew 13:43** (*"then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"*), **Daniel 12:3** (*"those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever"*), and **1 Enoch 51:5** (*"the righteous shall shine more than the sun"*) — the standard apocalyptic resurrection-glory trope, especially developed in the Ethiopian Enoch tradition.

Chapter 14

Introduction

Chapter 14 is the **longest chapter in 2 Meqabyan** (36 verses) and the most theologically distinctive: the **anti-sectarian resurrection-polemic chapter**. The opening (vv. 1–9) names **four sectarian errors** about resurrection — **the Jews, the Samaritans, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees** — each with a different distortion. This catalog is heavily NT-shaped: the Jewish slogan *"let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"* is a verbatim citation of **1 Cor 15:32 / Isa 22:13**; the four-fold taxonomy is the NT-era picture; and v. 24 cites Matt 23:2 (*"sit on Moses's seat"*) by name.

The middle of the chapter (vv. 10–23) develops the **cord-of-Sheol** image — a unique metaphor in EOTC literature in which the bond that drags the soul to Hades grows from the mother's womb up through life. The closing section (vv. 29–36) gives the **agricultural argument for resurrection** with explicit citations of pregnancy-as-resurrection (vv. 31–32) and the trumpet/storehouses-of-souls/in-the-blink-of-an-eye imagery (vv. 33–34).

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1 The matter of the **Jews and the Samaritans, the Pharisees and the Sadducees**, who do not believe the resurrection of the dead — this greatly grieves me; my heart knows it. The Jews say: *"Let us eat, let us drink; for tomorrow we die; there is nothing we see beyond."*

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:1:* The catalog of four sectarian errors — **Jews, Samaritans, Pharisees, Sadducees** — is one of the most striking single passages in 2 Meqabyan. It is heavily NT-shaped: the Jewish slogan *"let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"* directly cites **1 Corinthians 15:32 / Isaiah 22:13**, and the naming of Pharisees and Sadducees as sects with different resurrection-doctrines is the **NT-era taxonomy** (cf. Matt 22:23; Acts 23:6–8). The grouping of "Jews / Pharisees / Sadducees / Samaritans" as four separate categories implies a Christian-era external perspective looking back on intra-Jewish debate from outside.

2 The Samaritans say: *"Our flesh becomes dust; therefore it does not rise.*

3 *"At the time of the resurrection, we believe in the rising of our soul. For the soul is invisible like the wind, like a thunder-voice — no one can say, 'See, here she is'; she is not seen. Therefore even if the flesh dies, she does not die.*

4 *"But our flesh is visible in all; she becomes ash and dust. For wild beasts eat her; worms in the grave eat her.*

5 *"And those who have eaten her become as grass; they become dust as though never created; they become ash; their trace is not found. Where shall the rotten bodies be found?"*

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:2–5:* The position attributed to the **Samaritans** here — soul rises, body does not — is closer to **Greek philosophical dualism** (à la Plato's *Phaedo*) than to historical Samaritan eschatology. May reflect a generic doxographic stereotype rather than detailed knowledge of Samaritan belief.

6 The Pharisees say: *"We believe the rising of the dead. But souls — not on earth — in heaven, [God] clothes them with another body."*

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:6:* Strikingly, the position attributed to the **Pharisees** here — soul rises with a *different* body in heaven — is closer to the **Pauline doctrine** of **1 Corinthians 15:35–44** (*"there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body"*) than to historical Pharisaic Jewish doctrine. Meqabyan polemicizes against this position; the author's own doctrine, defended in vv. 8–16 below and 16:1–8, is **identity of the resurrection-body with the dead body**. One of the most precise theological positions in Meqabyan.

7 The Sadducees say: *"After our soul has gone out from our flesh, we do not rise from death; for soul and body there is no resurrection; after we die, we do not rise."*

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:7:* The position attributed to the **Sadducees** — no resurrection at all — is **canonically correct** (cf. **Acts 23:8**, *"the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both"*; **Matt 22:23**). This is the strongest evidence that 2 Mq's sectarian catalog is shaped by direct New Testament reading.

8 Therefore they utterly err; they speak blasphemy against God and his Lordship; their case grieves me.

9 They have not believed in God who justifies them; they have no hope of salvation; nor of rising from the dead.

10 O blind Jew! Will you make God who created you from non-existence — who, while you were as spittle, made you man — into one ignorant of knowledge? Is it impossible for him who created you in his image and likeness to unite your soul and your body and raise you?

11 You shall not escape from God's hand; do not think thus. Without your willing, you shall rise. At your death, the **cord of Sheol** by which you were taken is on your neck; without your willing, you shall be judged.

12 For that cord which is bound on your neck — from the stalk of Sheol — sprouts up to you in your mother's womb. As you grow, she also grows.

13 And at your death they place her on your neck; when they pull her stalk, she brings them; she draws her branches.

14 All sinners are seized within her with the cord on their neck.

15 And the souls of all sinners come from the edge of heaven where they are; so also your cord draws your soul from where you are and brings you into Sheol.

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:11–15:* The image of **the cord of Sheol** growing from the mother's womb and binding the soul at death is unparalleled in the canonical Geʿez Old Testament. The closest analogues are motifs in the **Apocalypse of Paul** (the souls dragged down by fiery cords) and **3 Baruch**. The growth-from-the-womb metaphor may also draw on **Psalm 51:5** (*"in sin did my mother conceive me"*). This image is **distinctively Meqabyan**.

16 After your flesh is separated from your soul, like the flesh of our father Adam, in completeness, by God's grace and dew, it rises. There, as you have done iniquity and sin, as you have not believed, you shall receive your recompense.

17 Do not think you only deceive others; you deceive yourself; in your error you abide in the grave; and saying *"there is no resurrection of the dead,"* you cause [people] to depart from the commandment of God.

18 As you have done your work, that he may give you your recompense, he shall raise you. Who, in the dust and ash, will leave you?

19 At that time, if there is in you a wind-nature [which is] in the wind, if there is in you a water-nature [which is] in the water, if there is in you an earth-nature [which is] on earth, if there is in you a fire-nature [which is] in fire — it shall come.

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:19:* The **four-elements doctrine** of body composition — fire, air (wind), water, earth — is Empedoclean / Galenic Greek natural philosophy, mediated to Ethiopian Christianity via Syriac and Coptic patristic literature. Each element returns to its like at death and is summoned back at resurrection. Cf. **Wisdom of Solomon 7:17**; **2 Maccabees 7:22** (the mother of the seven brothers: *“I know not how you came into being in my womb”*).

20 Even the soul that dwelt in you, dwelling in a dark place, shall come.

21 And the souls of the righteous, who dwell in joy in Paradise, shall come.

22 And you, O Jew, and you, O Samaritan, and you, O Pharisee, and you, O Sadducee — until you are judged, you shall dwell in darkness.

23 Then, because you deceived people, as your work was, you shall see how God repays you.

24 And you say: *“The dead do not rise; tomorrow we die; let us eat and drink”* — though **you sit on Moses’s seat**, in your word you say *“there is no resurrection of the dead.”*

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:24:* Direct citation of **Matthew 23:2** — *“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’s seat.”* This is one of the clearest single New Testament citations in 2 Mq, and paired with the *“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”* of v. 1 (1 Cor 15:32), makes vv. 1 and 24 the **two most-explicit NT-citation markers** in 2 Meqabyan.

25 Therefore, knowing the book of the Torah and teaching the word of the Scriptures, you err. It would have been better for you had you not learned — [and thus] not deceived people.

26 With your evil teaching and your unprofitable word, you cause God’s people to deny [him]. It would have been better had you not known the word of the Scriptures.

27 But you — as your work and the fruit of your lips, so shall be given you. For God shows no partiality of face; to his friends who teach good work, he gives from the grace he has prepared.

28 And from God who judges you, there is no escape; he will repay you according to your work; you and those you taught shall be judged together.

29 And know that the dead rise. Those who kept the law shall also rise; in the grave they cannot remain; for when rain falls, the earth brings forth grass — so his commandment brings them forth.

30 As when rain has watered the earth, the moist tree puts forth leaves; as wheat produces grain; as the grain field puts forth shoots; and as God, when he wills, cannot be refused her fruit;

31 as a pregnant woman, when birth-pangs have taken her, cannot close her womb or escape without giving birth —

32 so the earth — those gathered into her, she brings forth. After she has heard the word of God, she cannot close her womb; for the dew commanded from God descends upon her, and in one time she shall bear them all.

33 And the bodies shall be gathered at the places where their corpses fell; and **the storehouses of souls** shall be opened; and the souls shall return to the flesh from which they were first separated.

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:33:* The image of **storehouses of souls** (መዛግብት) — heavenly chambers where souls are kept between death and resurrection — is the **promptuaria animarum** tradition of **4 Ezra 4:35–37; 7:32; 7:80–87**, where the souls of the righteous wait in chambers (Latin *promptuaria*, Geʿez *makāneḏ*) until the day of resurrection. The same image appears in the **Apocalypse of Baruch (2 Baruch) 30:2; 21:23**.

34 And when the trumpet is sounded, **the dead shall rise in the blink of an eye**; they shall stand before God; and as their hands’ work, so shall be given them.

> *Note on 2 Mq 14:34:* Direct echo of **1 Corinthians 15:51–52** (*“we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump… and the dead shall be raised incorruptible”*) and **1 Thessalonians 4:16** (*“the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God”*).

35 At that time you shall see that you too rise with the dead; you shall marvel at all the work you did on earth; and when you see them written before your eyes, then you shall repent with worthless repentance.

36 You shall know that with the dead you rise; and as you have done, so you shall receive.

Chapter 15

Introduction

Chapter 15 (21 verses) is the **day-of-judgment chapter**: the assize where master is not honored above servant, rich not above poor, elder not above child — a profound social-equalization in the moment of final reckoning. The chapter closes (vv. 19–21) with the **“worm that does not sleep and fire that is not quenched”** citation of Isa 66:24 / Mark 9:48 — the canonical eternal-punishment formula.

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1 Those who find their good work shall be glad at that time. But those who disregarded, saying *“the dead do not rise,”* when they see that the dead are raised with their useless evil work, then they shall grieve.

2 That work they did shall judge them; and they themselves know that they shall be judged without dispute.

3 In the day of weeping and judgment — in the day of the final-decree, in the day of the LORD — the godless shall stand in the place of standing.

4 In the day of utter darkness, in the day of mist, in the day of lightning, in the day of thunder,

5 in the day of fear and trembling, in the day of cold and heat, in the day of frost,

6 in the day in which the evil man receives his recompense as he did evil; in the day in which the pure man receives his wage as he did pure work; in the day in which the sinner receives his recompense as he did sin;

7 in the day in which the master is not honored above his servant, when the mistress is not honored above her maidservant,

8 when the king is not honored above the poor, when the elder is not honored above the child, when the father is not honored above the son, when the mother is not honored above the daughter,

9 when the rich is not honored above the poor, when the arrogant is not honored above the humbled, when the great is not honored above the small. For it is the day of judgment; the day of recompense and punishment; the day in which each receives as he has done.

10 It is the day in which those who did good works receive their wage; the day in which those who did evil receive evil.

11 It is the day in which those who received their wage are glad; the day in which those who received evil grieve. And those who twist the Scriptures, saying *“the dead do not rise,”* also see.

12 Then the sinners of the earth weep for the sin they have done; and for the unsettled grief that comes upon them because of their failure to do good while on earth.

13 Likewise, because they did good work on earth, the joy of the doers of good — the good — shall not be fulfilled forever.

14 Knowing that they shall rise from death, they did not depart from the law of their Creator.

15 Because they did not depart from his commandment, they shall inherit two lives; on earth he multiplied their seed; he blessed their children.

16 And in heaven, on the day of resurrection — when the rich become poor — he shall give them as inheritance the Kingdom of Heaven, which he swore to their fathers.

17 Those who do evil and do not believe the rising of the dead, who do not consider the law of God and the day of resurrection — they shall weep.

18 Then they shall see the affliction without end, the affliction without salvation or settlement that comes upon them; in their mind there shall be unsettled grief without rest.

19 **The worm that does not sleep, the fire that is not quenched**, shall reach them.

> *Note on 2 Mq 15:19:* Direct citation of **Isaiah 66:24** / **Mark 9:48** (*"where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched"*). The Markan tripled citation (Mark 9:44, 46, 48) makes this the most-emphasized eternal-punishment formula in the Synoptics.

20 And on the place where their flesh is, fire and sulphur, whirlwind, frost and hail, brimstone shall rain upon them.

21 Upon the people who do not believe the rising of the dead is the fire of Gehenna.

Chapter 16

Introduction

Chapter 16 (15 verses) is the **nails-and-hair argument chapter**. The body's continuous regeneration of hair and nails (vv. 1–2) is offered as everyday proof that resurrection of the body is possible. The body's natural regenerative capacity is taken as a sign of God's resurrection-power; this is the most distinctive theological argument in 2 Mq. The chapter then transitions (vv. 3–9) into a botanical version of the **1 Corinthians 15** argument (each seed sprouts only its own kind), and closes (vv. 10–12) with the **"grinding of teeth and weeping"** formula direct from the Synoptics.

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1 Consider for yourself what is in your flesh: **the nails of your hands and feet, and the hair of your head**. When you cut them, they grow swiftly back. If you have heart and mind to believe, know this from that.

2 From where do these — the nails of your hand and foot, and the hair of your head — come, you ask? Has not God prepared them to grow, that you may know **the resurrection in your own flesh, not in another's** — that you may know the resurrection done in you?

> *Note on 2 Mq 16:1–2:* The **nail-and-hair argument** for resurrection — your body already demonstrates regeneration every day; therefore full resurrection is possible — is an unusual rabbinic-style argument. The closest patristic locus for the broader question of hair and nails in the resurrected body is **Augustine, *Enchiridion* §89** (*"it will make no difference to its reconstruction whether hairs go back to hairs and nails go back to nails, or whatever of these had perished be changed to flesh and be assigned to other parts of the body"*); the same Augustinian question is treated at length in ***City of God* 22.19**, which is the primary locus. Augustine's question is about reassembly of dispersed matter, however, rather than regenerative proof, and Meqabyan's formulation is independent. The "hair and nails will rise" question is later developed at length in scholastic theology: **Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Suppl. Q. 80 a. 2** (referencing Peter Lombard, *Sent.* IV, D. 44). This is one of the most **distinctive theological arguments** in 2 Mq.

3 And you, saying *"there is no resurrection of the dead,"* deceiving people — as you have done sin and iniquity, you shall receive your recompense at the time of the resurrection.

4 When the day of your recompense reaches you, you shall see it. Even the wheat, even the barley you have sown does not refuse to sprout.

5 Again — the plant you planted does not say *“I will not sprout”*; whether vine or fig, the leaf and the fruit do not change.

6 If you plant a vine, it does not change to become a fig; if you plant a fig, it does not change to become a vine; if you sow wheat, it does not change to become barley;

7 if you sow barley, it does not change to become wheat. Rather, all by their kind and clan, by their fruit and tree, by their leaf and root — receiving blessing through the dew of mercy from God — bring forth fruit.

> *Note on 2 Mq 16:4–7:* The “each seed in its own kind” argument follows the precise structure of **1 Corinthians 15:37–38** (*“what you sow, you do not sow that body which shall be… but God gives it a body as he pleases, and to each seed its own body”*). The wheat-barley-vine-fig contrast develops the Pauline analogy with characteristic agricultural specificity.

8 So also the earth — what God sowed in her, soul and flesh, she brings forth; what God sowed, soul and flesh in unity, shall rise. Those who did good works are not exchanged for those who did evil; those who did evil are not exchanged for those who did good.

9 When the hour of the trumpet’s sounding has come, the dead shall rise by the dew of mercy from God; those who did good shall rise to **the resurrection of life**; their wage is what God has prepared for the good — the dwelling of the pure, the Paradise of joy, where there is no affliction or disease, where they shall no more die.

10 But those who did evil shall rise to **the resurrection of judgment**, and with the deceiver Devil,

11 with his armies the demons — who do not wish that even one of the sons of men should be saved — they shall go to eternal punishment.

12 To the edge of darkness where there is **grinding of teeth and weeping**; where there is no forgiveness or mercy; where there is no exit forever — they shall descend into Gehenna. While they were in their flesh, on earth in their life, they did no good work.

> *Note on 2 Mq 16:12:* The phrase **“grinding of teeth and weeping”** (ጥርሰ ማፋጨትና ልቅሶ) is a direct calque on the Synoptic formula **Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30 / Luke 13:28** (*klauthmós kai brygmós tōn odóntōn*, *“weeping and gnashing of teeth”*). Six Synoptic occurrences make this one of the most-cited NT expressions in late-antique Christian literature.

13 Therefore both soul and flesh shall be judged at the resurrection.

14 Woe to those who do not believe the rising of soul and flesh in unity — by which God shows the multitude of his wonders!

15 All — each one — shall receive his wage as his work and the labor of his hand.

Chapter 17

Introduction

Chapter 17 (12 verses) develops the **wheat-grain dying analogy** of 1 Cor 15:36 / John 12:24, with a beautiful expansion into the symbolic geography of plant growth: water, earth, sun, wind become resurrection-analogues of body, soul, fire-grace, and breath. The vine and its fruit serve as a parallel image, leading to a brief excursus on wine’s gladdening of the heart (Ps 104:15).

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1 A grain of wheat does not sprout if it does not first break; it bears no fruit. But if the wheat-grain breaks, it sends down its root to the earth; it puts forth a leaf; it becomes a shoot; it bears fruit.

> *Note on 2 Mq 17:1:* Direct citation of **John 12:24** (*“unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”*) and **1 Corinthians 15:36** (*“that which you sow is not made alive unless it dies”*) — the two canonical proof-texts for the seed-resurrection analogy. Patristic developments of the same seed-and-vegetative-resurrection argument: **Tertullian, *De Resurrectione Carnis* 52**; **Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum* 1.13** (late 2nd c.; one of the earliest extended Christian uses of the botanical resurrection argument).

2 You know that one grain of wheat becomes many grains.

3 Likewise, this grain sprouts because of wind and water and earth; the sun stands in place of fire. Wheat cannot bear fruit without the sun.

4 The wind stands in place of the soul; without the wind, wheat cannot bear; the water gives the earth drink and quenches her thirst.

5 The earth, after she has drunk the water, brings forth the root; her shoot ascends; as God has blessed her, she bears.

6 But the grain of wheat is **the image of Adam**, in which the rational soul God created has dwelt; so also the vine — it drinks water; it sends down its root; the slender cords of its root pull water.

7 And it raises that water to the tips of its leaves; for the dew from God waters the tall tips of the vines. In the heat of the sun, it sprouts forth; by the will of God, it bears fruit.

8 It makes a sweet savor that gladdens the heart; when one eats, it satisfies like grain that does not let one hunger, like water that does not let one thirst; when pressed, it becomes wine.

9 When drunk, it gladdens the heart of man — *“wine gladdens the heart of man,”* as said in the Psalm. The careless man who opens his mouth and drinks becomes drunk; it fills his lungs; the blood flows to his heart.

> *Note on 2 Mq 17:9:* Direct citation of **Psalm 104:15** (numbered 103:15 LXX/Vulgate): *“and wine that maketh glad the heart of man.”*

10 Wine intoxication greatly deceives, taking his sense; the ditch and the cliff he sees as a wide field; he does not know the stumbling-block and thorn at his hand and foot.

11 And God did so with the vine and its fruit — that he might be praised in his name by those who do his will and believe the resurrection of the dead.

12 Those who believe the rising of the dead — he gladdens in the dwelling of life.

Chapter 18

Introduction

Chapter 18 (14 verses) is a **second-person address to the resurrection-deniers**, followed by the classic **ubi sunt** (“where are…”) meditation on human transience (vv. 11–14). The key theological move at vv. 7–8 is the **Adamic-mortality doctrine** — *“we are all sons of Adam, and by Adam we have died”* — a direct echo of **Romans 5:12 / 1 Corinthians 15:21–22**.

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1 People who do not believe the resurrection of the dead — how greatly do you err? When they have led you to a place you do not know, when they have cast you into Gehenna because you did not believe the rising of the dead in soul and body together, then you shall repent with useless repentance.

2 Saying *“we know the dead, who have become dust and ash, do not rise,”* you deceive the minds of your neighbors — and you shall receive your wage as you have done, whether good or evil.

3 Therefore they deceive their neighbors. Their death has no rest; their scourge has no strength; in their toil they have not stood firm; before God's assize they must stand.

4 When [God] rebukes them in his wrath, when he is angry that they have done evil, they shall be greatly ashamed. They speak without knowing the way of God; they do not know where they came from.

5 Nor the Gehenna they go to do they know; full of wrath, perverse in their work and evil, they teach their neighbors according to the perversity of their mind. Saying *"there is no resurrection of the dead,"* they teach a perverse thing.

6 Then they shall know the dead rise; that they shall be judged because they did not believe the resurrection of the dead that comes for all the kindred of the sons of men.

7 For we are all sons of Adam; and **by Adam we have died**. By the transgression of our father Adam, we have received the sentence of death from God.

> *Note on 2 Mq 18:7:* Direct echo of **Romans 5:12** (*"as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"*) and **1 Corinthians 15:21–22** (*"for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"*) — the Pauline doctrine of corporate Adamic mortality. One of the clearer NT echoes in 2 Mq. Pseudepigraphic parallels for the Adamic-mortality motif: **2 Baruch 23:4** (*"when Adam sinned and death was decreed against those who were to be born"*) and **48:42–43**; **Apocalypse of Moses (Greek LAE) 14:2** (*"on account of you [Adam] toils and labor were assigned to us"*). For a *Greek* Maccabees motif-parallel despite the books being generically unrelated, compare **4 Maccabees 18:7–8** (the mother's speech: "the deceitful serpent… defile the purity of my virginity") — useful for navigating the persistent genre-confusion between Meqabyan and LXX 2/4 Maccabees.

8 Again, that we may receive our wages for the work we have done, we shall rise with our father Adam; for by our father Adam's ignorance, the world was subjected to death.

9 Therefore, by Adam's transgression, we receive our recompense. Our flesh melts in the grave; our bones are crushed.

10 The earth drinks our marrow; we perish; the beauty of our face perishes in the dust; our flesh is buried in the tomb; our beautiful voice is buried in the earth.

11 From our shining eyes, worms come forth; our form perishes in the grave; we become dust.

12 Where is the beauty of the youths whose form was beautiful, whose stature was lovely, whose speech was smooth?

13 Where is the strength of warriors? Where is the might of kings, the honor of princes? Where is the parading on horseback, the adornment in gold and silver, the parading in shining weapons?

14 Where is the taste of dainty foods and the sweet drinking of wine?

> *Note on 2 Mq 18:11–14:* A classic **ubi sunt** ("where are…") rhetorical sequence — the standard late-antique and medieval Christian meditation on the transience of beauty, strength, wealth, and pleasure. Closest parallels are **Sirach 38:23**; the Ecclesiastes-vanitas tradition; and the rich man's banquet in **Luke 16**. The form would be transmitted into medieval Christian sermons under the heading *ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt*.

Chapter 19

Introduction

Chapter 19 (15 verses) continues the **ubi sunt** apostrophe — now addressed to **Earth and Death** themselves, accusing them of having consumed all the beautiful, the strong, the wise. The chapter opens *"O Earth, who have gathered kings and princes…"* (v. 1); pivots to *"O Death, sent by the will of God…"* (v. 5); and closes

(vv. 14–15) with the resurrection-formula: *“the earth gathered their flesh… until the trumpet is sounded and the dead rise.”*

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1 O Earth, who have gathered kings and princes, the great and the honored, lovely women and fair maidens — woe to you because of yourself!

2 Those of good form, fair of countenance, possessed of knowledge and mind — whose word, like the playing of the harp, like the song of the lyre and the lute, was beautiful in melody;

3 whose voice, like sweet wine, gladdened; whose eyes shone like the morning star;

4 whose right hand was strong to give and take, who shot arrows; whose feet, like even wheels, ran beautifully — mighty men whom you have gathered — O Earth, woe to you because of yourself!

5 O Death, sent by the will of God, who has separated the souls of beautiful people from their flesh — woe to you because of yourself!

6 And you also, Earth! You have gathered the many bodies which God brought forth from you and returned to you. Woe to you because of yourself! By the will of God we came forth from you; to you we return; by the will of God we were glad upon you.

7 You became a couch for our corpses; on you we walked; in you we lay down; we ate your fruit; you ate our flesh.

8 From your spring, water we drank; you drank from the spring of our blood; from your fatness of earth we ate; you ate the fatness of our bones.

9 From your earth — that you might be our food, as God commanded — full of dew, grain we ate; you received the beauty of our flesh; as God commanded you, you made it dust for your food.

10 O Death, you who have gathered many mighty kings and princes — who, as God who created you commanded, were not afraid of their splendor and majesty, who did not despise even the hungry — woe to you because of yourself!

11 You have not pitied those of fair countenance; you have not left the strong and the warriors; the rich and the poor, the ill-favored and the fair, elders and children, women and men — you have not left.

12 Those who thought good and did not transgress his commandment, you have not left; those who in their work were as beasts, who thought evil, you have not left. Those whose beauty was perfect, whose word and matter were sweet, you have not left.

13 Those whose word was wrathful and whose mouth was full of curse, you have not left; their souls you gathered into your storehouses of light and darkness.

14 And the earth — gathered their flesh, whether in cave or in earth — until the trumpet is sounded and the dead rise.

15 Those who did evil shall receive their wage as their work. For at the sound of the trumpet and the commandment of God, the dead rise in the blink of an eye; and those who did good works shall be glad.

Chapter 20

Introduction

Chapter 20 (14 verses) is the **death-journey-of-the-soul chapter** — meditating on the moment the soul departs from the body without provisions, without garment, without staff or sandals, into a way it does not know. The center of the chapter is a direct citation of **Psalm 142:3–4** (v. 7) and the doctrine of **angels of light** versus **angels of darkness** who lead the souls of the righteous and the wicked respectively (vv. 10–12). The closing verse (v. 13) cites **Jude 11** directly: *“the way of Cain… the iniquity of Balaam.”*

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1 When in fear and trembling we stand before him, believe me — all the work we have done on earth shall not be hidden or pass away.

2 When we shall not have provisions for the way; when we shall have no garment for our body;

3 when we shall have no staff for our hand and no sandals for our feet;

4 when there shall be mire, ravine, darkness, thorn and bramble, sea-depth, pit-depth — when we do not know the way they take us;

5 when we do not know those who take us — and do not hear their speech;

6 for they are dark and lead us to darkness; we do not see their face.

7 As the prophet **David** said: *“When my soul was failing within me, O LORD my God, you knew my path; in the way I walked, they hid a snare against me. I looked to my right, and saw; there was no one who knew me; there was no place of refuge for me.”* [Ps 142:3–4]

> *Note on 2 Mq 20:7:* Direct citation of **Psalm 142:3–4** (numbered 141:3–4 LXX/Vulgate). The psalm is a classic prayer of the soul in distress; its application here to the moment of death is characteristic of patristic and monastic meditation on the *ars moriendi* tradition.

8 And David, when he said this, knew that the demons mock him and lead him to a way he does not know. Turning to the right and to the left, he found no one who knew him.

9 None knew him; but he was in the midst of the angels of darkness.

10 Those sent to the righteous are subtle **angels of light**, who receive the souls of the righteous and lead them to the place of life and light.

11 But those sent to the souls of the wicked are **angels of darkness and demons**, who take them and lead them to the eternal punishment prepared for them — that they may receive their recompense for the sin they have done.

12 Those who lead them to destruction — woe to the souls of the wicked, who have no rest or escape, who have no exit forever from the affliction that has come upon them.

13 They have gone in **the way of Cain**; they have perished in **the iniquity of Balaam**; they have abandoned all they ought to have done. To take by violence the wealth of another that is not theirs, they justify the taking of bribes and usury.

> *Note on 2 Mq 20:13:* **The way of Cain** + **the iniquity of Balaam** combination is a direct citation of **Jude 11** (*“woe to them; they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the rebellion of Korah”*). Another clear NT-era citation. The mention of **bribes and usury** as the wicked’s pretext is consistent with the OT prophetic catalogs (cf. Amos 5:12; Ezek 22:12).

14 And as their work has been, so shall they receive their recompense in the fire of Gehenna.

Chapter 21

Introduction

Chapter 21 is the **closing chapter of 2 Meqabyan** (28 verses). It opens with a final **ubi sunt** (“where are those who gather the wealth of others?”, v. 1) and a direct citation of **Psalm 37:35–36** (v. 5, *“I saw the sinner like the cedar of Lebanon… I returned and could not find him”*). The middle of the chapter (vv. 16–22) introduces the **cities of refuge** institution of Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 19, and Joshua 20 — the canonical sanctuary law for unintentional killers. The closing section (vv. 24–28) is a doxological summing-up:

those who do God's will are called sons of the righteous; they inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; first or last, they offer praise — *"From today and to eternity, Amen."*

This closing formula marks the **decisive end of 2 Meqabyan**.

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1 Where are those people who in violence gathered the wealth of others — wealth not their own, not the work of their own hand?

2 Without payment they take the wealth of others; not knowing the day of their death that shall reach them, they gather; and to strangers they leave their wealth.

3 Their children do not rejoice in their fathers' wealth; for like their fathers — sinners who afflict and seize, whether by theft or by plunder — they are the kindred of the wicked.

4 Their fathers' wealth does not profit them; it has been gathered by plunder and violence. Like the mist of urine, like the smoke the wind scatters, like the grass that withers, like the wax that melts before fire — so shall the honor of the wicked perish.

5 As **David** said: *"I saw the sinner like the cedar of Lebanon, flourishing and exalted; but when I returned, I missed him; I sought him; I did not find his place."* [Ps 37:35–36]

> *Note on 2 Mq 21:5:* Direct citation of **Psalm 37:35–36** (numbered 36:35–36 LXX/Vulgate), one of the classic OT wisdom-proverbs on the impermanence of wicked prosperity.

6 That those who today wrong their neighbors — gathering by violence the wealth of others, thinking themselves immortal — may not boast: the destruction of the wicked is thus, in one moment.

7 O fools — consider that you pass away, and that your wealth passes with you. Your gold and silver, however much, shall become rust.

8 Though you multiply children, it shall be the multiplication of graves; though you multiply houses, they shall be in ruin.

9 Because you have not done the will of God your God, though you multiply cattle, they shall become plunder for your enemies; for they are not blessed; all the wealth on which you have laid your hand shall not be found.

10 Whether in house or in wilderness, whether in pasture or in field, whether in threshing-floor or in winepress — it shall not be found.

11 Even in the fruit of your belly you shall not rejoice; rather, because of your enemies, it shall be sorrow to you. For because you have not kept the commandment of God, God will not save you together with all your household.

12 But those who have kept his law, ordinance, and commandment — from his blessing he does not withhold; all they have asked he gives; the fruit of their land and the fruit of their belly he blesses.

13 That they may rule and not be ruled, he sets them above all the heathen surrounding them; in their pasture-place he gives them all his blessing.

14 All on which they lay their hand, all the fruit of their field, all the place of their cattle, he blesses; in the fruit of their belly he gladdens them.

15 He does not diminish their cattle; from all their afflictions — from sickness and weariness, from destruction, from what is known and unknown — he saves them.

16 In the time of judgment he contends for them; from evil and affliction, from all who oppose them, he saves them. In the beginning, the Levite who received the work of the tent as a trust kept the work of the tent; if he walked in the will of God, in the first law as in all the [later] law, they gave him the tithe and the firstborn from man to cattle.

17 As Moses commanded **Joshua the son of Nun**, in their cities was a **city of refuge** — that any man might be saved there who had killed another, whether knowing or unknowing, until those who judge and those who are judged gave judgment.

Note on 2 Mq 21:17: The **cities of refuge** institution is from **Numbers 35:9–34; Deuteronomy 19:1–13; Joshua 20:1–9**. Six cities (Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth, Golan) were appointed where one who had killed unintentionally could flee from the avenger of blood, awaiting trial.

18 *"Examine in your mind whether he had a previous quarrel with him,"* he said to them;

19 *"and whether by axe, or stone, or wood — if it fell from his hand unknowingly and the man on whom it fell died — examining, save him; he did it unknowingly; he shall be saved.*

20 *"But if he did it knowingly, as his trespass deserves he shall receive his recompense; there is none who shows him mercy. If he did it unknowingly and killed him — because he did it unknowingly, examining, save him that he may not die."*

21 Moses had made for the sons of Israel an ordinance such as this, that they might not transgress the commandment of God; he had made for them an ordinance that they might depart from all wickedness.

22 That they might live by his judgment and his law — that they might wholly keep themselves from worshiping idols, from eating dead-of-itself and paw-struck — for those who live in the commandment of God and depart from every evil work, as he had ordained for them — that they might keep themselves utterly from all that is unfitting for the sons of men — he commanded them.

23 That they might save their souls, that they might find their dwelling with their fathers who did good — that they might not depart from the commandment he had made for them, in the image of the tent in heaven, he commanded them.

24 Those who believe the word of God and walk in his commandment — they are called sons of the righteous. From Adam and Seth, who did the will of God, they are.

25 We are sons of Adam; that we should do good work and all that pleases God — for he created us in his image and likeness — he does not despise us.

26 If we do good work, with those who did good work we shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; for he does not separate those who love each other.

27 Those who petition him in purity, he greatly loves; he hears their prayer; those who utterly repent, he accepts their repentance; to people who keep his law and ordinance and commandment, he gives strength and firmness.

28 And those who do his will — forever in his Kingdom they shall be glad with him; whether first or last, they shall offer him praise. **From today and unto eternity. Amen.**

Note on 2 Mq 21:28: The closing formula ከዛሬ ጀምሮ እስከ ዘለዓለም አሜን (*"From today and unto eternity, Amen"*) is the standard EOTC book-closing doxology. Unlike 1 Mq's double *"Amen, Amen"* (1 Mq 36:46), 2 Mq closes with a single *Amen* — a different but equally definitive book-marker.

End of the Second Book of Meqabyan

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Translator's closing note on 2 Meqabyan:

This translation of 2 Meqabyan was prepared as a fresh CC0 English rendering from the modern Amharic of the EOTC Bible (nehemiah-osc.org compilation) by Claude (Anthropic), May 2026. It is **not peer-reviewed**, **not collated against the Geʿez**, and represents a **single-witness, AI-assisted draft** intended as a starting point for serious scholarly translation work.

The 21 chapters can be summarized in three movements:

1. **Chs. 1–4 — The conversion of Maqabis-of-Moab.** Maqabis-of-Moab is initially the destroyer of Jerusalem (Ch. 1, with the Ps 79:2–3 quotation and the war-atrocity formulas of 2 Kings 8:12, etc). The prophet Re'ay confronts him (Ch. 2); he undergoes radical penance, digging a pit and entering it up to his neck (Ch. 3:2); he converts and adopts the full Mosaic observance, including dietary laws, sacrificial system, Tabernacle furnishings (Chs. 3–4). He dies *"in good"* — peacefully, as a righteous person (4:32). **The most striking conversion-narrative in Ethiopian biblical literature.**
2. **Chs. 5–12 — The martyrdom of his five sons and the death of Ṣiruṣaydan.** King Ṣiruṣaydan of the Chaldeans (the same villain as 1 Mq Chs. 1–4) arrives after Maqabis's death and captures his sons (Ch. 5). They refuse to sacrifice and are burned (Ch. 6); they appear to the king at night with drawn swords (Ch. 6:14 — direct parallel to 1 Mq 4:8). After their post-mortem rebuke, God hides their bodies from him (Ch. 7:9 — paralleling Moses's hidden grave). Ṣiruṣaydan then resumes his arrogant world-conquest (Ch. 8), but is finally struck down (Ch. 12:13) by **an angel of death named Ṭelmiyakos**, in an Acts 12-style hubris-and-fall scene. His city is plundered and burned on the same day.
3. **Chs. 13–21 — Resurrection theology and final doxology.** The closing nine chapters develop the most sustained resurrection-doctrine in 1 or 2 Mq: the **five martyred sons of Maqabis-of-Moab** are the structural mirrors of the five martyrs of 1 Mq (Ch. 13:1); the four-fold **anti-sectarian polemic against Jews, Samaritans, Pharisees, Sadducees** is laid out (Ch. 14:1–7); the *"narrow-way / broad-way"* contrast of Matt 7 is cited (9:22–23); the *"resurrection of life / resurrection of judgment"* of John 5:29 is named (9:16; 16:9–11); the **nail-and-hair argument for bodily resurrection** is uniquely developed (Ch. 16:1–2); the **1 Cor 15:36 / John 12:24 wheat-grain analogy** is expanded (Ch. 17); a classic **ubi sunt** sequence apostrophizes Earth and Death (Chs. 18–19); the **Adamic-mortality doctrine** of Rom 5:12 is cited (18:7); the **Jude 11** *"way of Cain / iniquity of Balaam"* is cited (20:13); and the closing chapter (Ch. 21) returns to the cities-of-refuge institution before sealing with *"From today and unto eternity, Amen."*

The most dating-significant features of 2 Meqabyan are:

1. **Ch. 1:11** ripping of fetuses (war-atrocity formula of 2 Kings 8:12; Hos 13:16);
2. **Ch. 4:15** Maqabis-of-Moab adopts Jewish dietary law as a Gentile (parallels Ruth-the-Moabite);
3. **Ch. 8:8–9** post-Roman-conquest toponyms (Macedonia, Achaia as provinces);
4. **Ch. 9:22–23** Matt 7:13–14 narrow-way / broad-way citation;
5. **Ch. 12:11–13** death of Ṣirusaydan in Acts 12 / Isa 14 hubris-fall pattern, with the unique angel-name *Ṭelmiyakos*;
6. **Ch. 13:1** "five sons of Maqabis" confirms 1 Mq / 2 Mq narrative parallelism;
7. **Ch. 14:1, 24** explicit naming of **Pharisees and Sadducees**; direct citation of Matt 23:2;
8. **Ch. 17:1** direct citation of John 12:24 / 1 Cor 15:36;
9. **Ch. 18:7** Romans 5:12 Adamic-mortality echo;
10. **Ch. 20:13** direct Jude 11 citation.

Taken together, the evidence strongly suggests **Christian-era composition for 2 Meqabyan, with substantial New Testament integration**. The four-fold sectarian polemic of Ch. 14 in particular (Jews/Samaritans/Pharisees/Sadducees) reads as Christian-external rather than internal-Jewish, and the resurrection-doctrine matches the Pauline framework of 1 Corinthians 15 throughout. Like 1 Meqabyan, the present form most plausibly belongs to the **Aksumite-to-Solomonic Ethiopian Christian range (4th–14th c. CE)**, drawing on inherited Jewish-and-Christian apocalyptic and resurrection traditions. The shared Maqabean-martyrology architecture across 1 Mq and 2 Mq could indicate either common authorship or a deliberate compositional response — modern critical scholarship treats the three books as compositionally distinct (the EOTC liturgical tradition, however, receives them together as a canonical unit).

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The Third Book of Meqabyan

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Preface to 3 Meqabyan

The Third Book of Meqabyan opens with the most theologically distinctive prologue in the trilogy: a **dialogue between the Devil and God** (Chs. 1–4) about the origin of evil, the Devil's hubris and fall, the creation of Adam to fill the angelic place the Devil forfeited, the Devil's deception of Eve and Adam, and the cycle of repentance and forgiveness. Unlike 1 Mq and 2 Mq — which work through narrative martyrologies anchored on the figure of Ṣiruṣaydan and the two Maqabean families — 3 Mq is **angelological theodicy**: it explores the question *"why was Adam created, and why did the Devil fall?"* and answers it in terms of a divine economy of replacement-praise.

The opening verse announces that *"the islands of Egypt rejoice over the merciful and meek one to come in the latter time"* — a messianic prologue echoing **Isaiah 19:18–25** and the standard Christian-era messianic vocabulary (cf. Matt 11:29 *"I am meek and lowly of heart"*). The book then develops as a sustained meditation on demonology, anthropology, and resurrection. Chapters 1–4 give the angelological-cosmogonic answer; chapters 5–10 turn to ethical exhortation about wealth, false oaths, judgment, and resurrection.

3 Mq has 10 chapters and approximately 208 verses. As with 1 Mq and 2 Mq, the translation is based on the Amharic of the EOTC Bible (nehemiah-osc.org compilation), retains the verse numbering of the source, and follows the same scholarly conventions established for the earlier books.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1 (24 verses) is one of the most distinctive theological compositions in the entire EOTC corpus: a **first-person speech of the Devil** (vv. 3–15) narrating his strategy of human deception, followed by his own **petition to God** (vv. 17–21) — the petition being that those whom he has deceived should suffer punishment with him, and that those who refused him should receive his crown. The framing (vv. 1–2, 22–24) establishes this whole exchange as taking place under God's sovereign permission — a theodicy in dialogue form.

The closest parallels are with: - ***Vita Adae et Evae* §§12–17** (Latin recension; absent from Greek *Apocalypse of Moses*), where Satan tells Adam he refused to worship him at his creation and was cast down for it — directly parallels 1:15 (*"because I would not bow to my inferior"*). - **2 Enoch 29:4–5** (longer recension J; cf. 31:3–6, which links the fall explicitly to Adam), Satan's pride and fall. - **Cave of Treasures §2** (Budge 1927; Reeves Occidental Recension), Satan refuses to worship Adam at his creation. - **Job 1–2**, Satan

addressing God and being given permission to act on humans — paralleling the structure of the petition here. - **Isaiah 14:13–14; Ezekiel 28:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:4**, the antichrist hubris-formula at 1:3.

The chapter is also notable for its catalogue of **demonic divinatory signs** (vv. 11–14) — divinations through stars, clouds, fire, animal cries — which the Devil uses to lead people astray through false omens.

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1 Concerning the merciful and meek one who is to come in the latter time, who shall avenge himself against the cruel and deceiving Devil — the opposer of his Creator's way — **the islands of Egypt rejoice**.

> *Note on 3 Mq 1:1:* The opening is among the most distinctively Christian-sounding lines in the trilogy. **"The merciful and meek one (ቸርና የዋህ) who is to come in the latter time"** echoes **Matthew 11:29** (*"I am meek and lowly of heart"*) and the standard Christian-era messianic vocabulary. **"The islands of Egypt rejoice"** likely draws on **Isaiah 19:18–25** (the prophecy that Egypt and Assyria will worship the LORD) — a passage read in Christian patristic tradition as a prophecy of Coptic and Aksumite Christianity. **"Islands of Egypt"** (የግብጽ ደሴቶች) may be a metonym for the early Christian Coptic communities, or more broadly for the distant Mediterranean and Indian Ocean Christian nations.

2 And he shall avenge him; for he [the Devil] has exalted himself in his heart; [the avenger] shall return his glory to the earth and to humiliation.

3 For he [the Devil] said: *"Who is above me? I will enter the depths of the sea; I will ascend to heaven; I will see the deeps; I will grasp the sons of Adam like the chicks of a bird, and I will seize them.*

> *Note on 3 Mq 1:3:* The Devil's hubris-speech combines **Isaiah 14:13–14** (*"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God"*), **Ezekiel 28:2–19** (the king of Tyre's claim to divinity, extended through the cherub-in-Eden Satan-fall passage at vv. 12–19), and **2 Thessalonians 2:4** (the man of lawlessness). The image of seizing humans *"like bird-chicks"* (እንደ ወፍ ጫጩት) is more visceral than the canonical models — emphasizing predation. **Patristic and Syriac antecedents for the Satan-as-falling-cherub reading include Ephrem the Syrian, *Carmina Nisibena* 54.9 and *Hymnen contra Haereses* 26.4.10** (Syriac etymologies inherited by the Cave of Treasures), and **Jacob of Serugh's homilies on the Good Shepherd / on the fall of Satan** (in Paul Bedjan, *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, 5 vols., Paris/Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1905–1910; reprinted with S. P. Brock as 6 vols., Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2006).

4 *"That I may turn them away from the straight law of God, I will create occasion against them; I shall prevail over people who live on earth and have not done God's will; there is none who shall deliver from my hand.*

5 *"And I shall return them to a perverse path, that they may go with me to destruction.*

6 *"Therefore those who love him and keep his law hate me. But those who err, separated from their Lord, come to me; they love me; they keep my covenant. I darken their hearts that they may not return to God their Creator; I twist their thoughts; they do my commandment as I have commanded them.*

7 *"When I show them the wealth of this world, I lead their minds astray from the straight way; when I show them beautiful women and maidens, by these I lead them away.*

8 *"When I show them the gleaming gems of India, gold and silver — that they may turn to my work — by these too I lead them away.*

9 *"When I show them fine clothing, white silk and red silk, brocade and fine linen, by these I lead them away; I return them to my thought. When I show them silver and cattle multiplied as the sand, by this too I return them to my work.*

10 *"Concerning women, anger and quarrel, prideful jealousy — when I show them these, by all this I return them to my way.*

11 *"When I show them **signs**, I dwell in the mind of their neighbors; in their minds I cause a sign-matter to dwell of itself; I show them the sign of their word and lead them astray.*

12 *“To the people whom I have made my dwelling, I show signs — whether by the motion of stars, or by the rising of clouds, or by the flickering of fire, or by the cries of beasts and birds — they are dwellings; by all this I cause signs to dwell in their mind.*

13 *“They speak and give a sign to their neighbors; and as those diviners told them before, I become their sign.*

> *Note on 3 Mq 1:11–13:* The catalog of **demonic divinatory signs** — through stars (astrology), clouds (nephomancy), fire (pyromancy), animal cries (augury) — is comparable to the catalog of forbidden divination in **Deuteronomy 18:10–12** (*“no divination, observer of times, enchanter, witch, charmer, consulter with familiar spirits, wizard, necromancer”*). Meqabyan places the active agent inside the diviner: the Devil himself dwells in them and produces the omen.

14 *“To the people who say to their neighbors, ‘There are no diviners like so-and-so and so-and-so — who, having examined them, give their wage; whose prophecies happen as they spoke; who distinguish evil and good; for whom all comes to pass as they spoke’ — for these, I make the sign of their word.*

15 *“That those who shall perish and those who err in me may utterly multiply, that the sons of Adam may perish with me — when they say this, I am glad.* ***For when I said ‘I will not bow to my inferior,’ God for the sake of their father Adam humbled me from my glory.***

> *Note on 3 Mq 1:15:* This verse is the **explicit Meqabyan version of the Satan-refused-to-worship-Adam tradition** — found principally in the Latin ***Vita Adae et Evae* §§12–17** (Pettorelli & Kaestli, *Vita Latina Adae et Evae*, Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 18, Brepols 2012; Satan tells Adam: *“on your account I was cast out from the heavens… when God blew into you the breath of life, and you were made in the image of God, Michael led you and said to me: Worship the image of God. And I said: I will not worship one inferior to me… and the Most High became angry with me and sent me with my angels out of our glory”*; **absent from the Greek *Apocalypse of Moses***), in **2 Enoch 29:4–5** (longer recension J; cf. 31:3–6 linking the fall explicitly to Adam), in the **Qur’an** (the full seven-passage cluster: Sura 2:34; 7:11–18; 15:28–38; 17:61; 18:50; 20:116; 38:71–78 — Iblis refuses to bow to Adam), in the EOTC’s ***Cave of Treasures* §2** (Budge 1927; Reeves OR ed.), and in the proximate Geʿez recipient of this tradition, the ***Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*** (Dillmann, *Das Christliche Adambuch des Morgenlandes*, Göttingen 1853; Trumpp 1880; Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*, London 1882). Among Jewish sources, the *only* unambiguous parallel preserving angelic worship of Adam is **Bereshit Rabbati** of Moses ha-Darshan (Narbonne, 11th c.), ed. Chanoch Albeck (Jerusalem: Mekitse Nirdamim, 1940), pp. 24–25. Comparative Coptic parallel: *Discourse on Abbatôn, the Angel of Death* by Timothy, Archbishop of Rakoti (Alexandria), in E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms etc.* (London: British Museum, 1914), pp. 482ff. — particularly relevant given the 3 Mq 1:1 *“islands of Egypt”* Egypto-Christian touches. The verse provides the **canonical EOTC explanation for the origin of demonic enmity toward humans**: Satan was deposed because he refused to worship the image of God in Adam. This is the **most diagnostic angelological verse** in 3 Mq.

16 *“And I have a covenant with God my Creator: those whom I have deceived, who walk in my commandment, shall be cast with me into the fire.*

17 *“When I had multiplied my arrogance against him, when he had commanded that they bind me and cast me into Gehenna and the depth of Sheol, I petitioned my Lord. When my Creator had so commanded — ‘You have stirred my anger; you have rebuked me with your scourge; you have struck me with your wrath’ — I said, ‘O my Lord, permit me to speak one matter before you,’ and I petitioned in his presence.*

18 *“And my Lord said in reply: ‘Speak, I will hear you.’ At that time I began to petition him thus: ’After I am humbled from my glory, let those whom I have deceived be with me in the affliction I receive.*

19 *“’But those who refused me, who did not err in me, who do your commandment, who fulfill your will, who keep your word — those who would not keep my commandment, who refused me when I tried to teach them, who though I deceived them did not err in me — let them belong to your kingdom; let them take the crown you gave me when you loved me.*

20 *“’Give my crown to the authorities who were not banished with me and not called Satans; in my throne emptied of me and my armies, at your right hand place them.*

21 *“‘As you have desired, let them praise you; let them be as I and as my armies were. For you have hated me, and have loved those created from ash and earth; my authority has been overturned; their authority has been exalted; as you desire, let them praise you.’”*

> *Note on 3 Mq 1:17–21:* The **Devil’s petition** — that those he has deceived should share his punishment, and that those who refused him should be exalted in his place — is unique in Geʿez literature. Theologically, it functions as a **theodicy-by-consent**: the Devil himself agrees to the principle that those who follow him in deception share his fate, while those who resist him inherit his lost glory. The image of humans inheriting the seats of fallen angels parallels the patristic doctrine of **Augustine, *Enchiridion* §29; *City of God* 22.1**, and **Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* 1.16–18** — that the number of the elect equals the number of fallen angels, and humans fill the empty places. The use of dialogue-form to deliver this doctrine is, however, distinctive to 3 Mq.

22 And my Lord said in reply: *“Because, seeing and hearing my work, they have not loved me — but you — let them be according to your desire and your word.*

23 *“If they have left my commandment and the words of the Scriptures and come to you, their destruction does not grieve me. You also, with those you have deceived — shall be punished with you in Gehenna.*

24 *“Forever, for you and those who erred in you, there is no exit from the punishment of Gehenna; rather, forever in fire you shall be tormented.”*

Chapter 2

Introduction

Chapter 2 (23 verses) opens with God’s reply to the Devil — citing the failure to deceive **Job** (v. 1) as the model — and then continues with the Devil’s renewed catalog of human deceptions (vv. 2–7): food, drink, clothing, hearing, sight, touch, pride, sleep, drunkenness, blasphemy, jokes, slander, beauty, perfumes. The prophet then enters (v. 8) and addresses the Devil directly, retelling the **creation of Adam to replace the fallen angels in the praise of God** (vv. 9–13), the giving of the commandment about the fig tree (vv. 14–15), and the deception of Eve via venomous flattery (vv. 16–21). The chapter closes (vv. 22–23) with the doctrine of Adam’s **Ten Consciousnesses** (0ሥር ሕሊናት) — the ten rational faculties of the human soul that praise God, comparable to the ten strings of the harp.

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1 *“But you, who could not deceive my servant Job — by honor I will inherit your throne to those of them; those whom you could not deceive, I will give the Kingdom of Heaven — says God who rules all.”*

> *Note on 3 Mq 2:1:* Direct reference to **Job 1–2** — the prologue dialogue in which Satan attempts (with God’s permission) to deceive Job through suffering and fails. The verse functions as God’s response to the Devil’s petition in Ch. 1: those whom the Devil could not deceive shall inherit his lost glory.

2 *“And I [the Devil] shall deceive the sons of Adam in all things. If I can deceive them, I shall not leave them to stand firm in good work. I shall deceive all the sons of Adam; I shall make sweet to them the desire of the world.*

3 *“In loving food, in loving drink, in loving clothing — in loving matter, in giving and receiving;*

4 *“in loving hearing and sight; in loving touch and walking; in multiplying pride and matter; in loving sleep and dream;*

5 *“in multiplying drink and drunkenness; in multiplying blasphemy and anger; in speaking jest and joke;*

6 *“in slandering one’s neighbor in quarrel; in seeing the beautiful women of this world; in smelling the perfumes that lead astray —*

7 *"in all this I shall hurl them down, that they may not be saved. Through them, that they may enter with me into the destruction to which I was humbled from my throne, I shall lead them away from the way of God."*

8 And the prophet said: *"You destroyer and destroyed! In your arrogance and the hardness of your heart — by grieving your Creator and not praising your Creator — when you departed from God's commandment and denied him, how do you exalt yourself thus over the creation of God?*

9 *"When your Creator was angry with you for your evil work, he cast you down. Why do you take the wretch whom your Creator created from earth and dust, whom he formed as he pleased, whom he set for his praise?*

10 *"You, the subtle one, whom he created from flame of fire and wind, when you exalted yourself, saying 'I am the Creator' —*

11 *"and when you boasted, God saw your evil work; that his name might be praised without lack — that one might praise him in your stead — **he created Adam**. For you, with your armies, had denied God.*

12 *"And Adam and his children were created **that they might praise the name of God in your stead** — you and your armies who despised God on account of your arrogance — for you had exalted yourself above all the archangels.*

> *Note on 3 Mq 2:11–12:* The doctrine that **Adam was created to replace the fallen angels in the praise of God** is the EOTC's resolution of the theological problem: *why* was Adam created? Answer: that God's praise would not be diminished by the loss of the rebellious angels. The same doctrine appears in **Augustine, *Enchiridion* §29**; **Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* 1.16–18**; and in the EOTC liturgical-anthropological tradition. The Devil's fall and Adam's creation are causally connected — Adam exists *because* the Devil fell.

13 *"Therefore God separated you from all archangels like you and humbled you. You — who were created with one counsel together with your armies — for the unprofitable hardness of your mind and the arrogance of your thought, you departed from the praise of God; you erred; you exalted yourself, not against another, but against your Creator.*

14 *"Therefore — that he might be praised by the humble — he created Adam from the earth of the ground. He gave him commandment and law that he should not eat from the fruit of the fig.*

15 *"He appointed him over all he had created. He made known to him thus: 'Eat from every tree in the Garden; but from the one tree which is the thorn of death, do not eat — lest you bring death upon yourself.'*

16 *"And when you heard this word, upon Eve — who was found from Adam's rib — you spat the venom of your mouth.*

17 *"That you might make her a law-breaker like yourself, by evil flattery you seized the innocent lamb.*

18 *"When you deceived Eve — who was created as a meek dove, who did not know your cunning — by your prepared matter and your perverse word, you caused her to deny [God]. And after you had deceived that first creature, she went and deceived God's first earth-creation, Adam.*

19 *"In your pride, you added unbecoming uproar to him; you caused him to deny his Creator's word; in your pride, you destroyed the poor one.*

20 *"In your cunning, you separated him from his Creator's love; through your contrivance, you brought him out of the Paradise of joy; through your stumbling-block, you caused him to leave the food of Paradise.*

21 *"In your falsehood, you made him thirst for the drink of Paradise. For from the beginning you have been opposed to the meek Adam — that you might bring him down to the Sheol where you receive your recompense — from his God who loves him, who brought him from non-existence into true existence.*

22 *"Though he was earthly, in soul and flesh and mind he made him spiritual and rational — that he might honor and praise his Creator.*

23 *"As the harp [praises] with many varied modes, **he created for him ten Consciousnesses** that praise."*

> *Note on 3 Mq 2:23:* The doctrine of the **ten Consciousnesses** (ዐሥር ሕሊናት, *ʿaśru ḥellināt*) of Adam — comparable to the ten strings of the harp by which praise is offered — appears here in what may be its earliest Geʿez attestation. The scriptural anchor is **Psalm 33:2; 92:3; 144:9** (*"praise*

the LORD with the harp; sing unto him with the psaltery of ten strings"). The dominant Ethiopian decimal symbolism for the ten-stringed harp/psaltery is **the Decalogue**, mediated by the **begena** (ten-stringed lyre) liturgical tradition. The patristic decimal-Decalogue reading is well-attested: **Origen**, *Commentary on Psalm 33* fragments (PG 12); **Augustine**, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* on Pss 32, 92, and 144 (cf. CSEL 93/94). The Meqabyan move of applying the ten-strings image to *inner faculties of Adam* is distinctive; no parallel articulation of "ten consciousnesses" has been located in the surveyed corpus of Geʿez systematic theology (including the *Mäṣḥafä Məsṭir* of Giyorgis of Sägla [c. 1364–1425 CE], whose anthropology is the classical body + (rational/animal) soul dichotomy, per the recent editions by Yaqob Beyene [CSCO Aeth. 89/90/97/98] and the two 2024 English translations [Hiruie Ermias, Negarit Publisher, ISBN 978-99990-52-69-6 (foreword by A. Bausi); Klumpenhouwer, Haymanot Sankofa Publishing]). The Andəmta commentary on the Psalter — printed only in Amharic and not yet searchable digitally — remains the most likely venue for an EOTC ten-fold gloss on Pss 33/92/144 and merits direct consultation.

Chapter 3

A short chapter (11 verses) developing the **contrast between the Devil's single thought and Adam's many thoughts**. The Devil has only one mind (singular focus on destruction); Adam was given ten thoughts — five good and five evil — and is moved by many wave-like and wind-driven impulses. The chapter then recapitulates the **serpent-Eve-Adam fall** (vv. 5–6), the expulsion from Paradise (v. 7), and God's consolation of Adam through children and the fruit of the earth (vv. 8–11).

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1 *"To you, your Creator created one mind, that you might constantly praise him as you were sent.*

2 *"But to Adam he gave **ten thoughts — five evil and five good** — together making ten thoughts.*

Note on 3 Mq 3:2: The doctrine of **ten thoughts (five good and five evil)** in Adam complements the **ten Consciousnesses** of 2:23. The five-and-five division resembles the **two-spirits doctrine of 1QS 3:13–4:26 (the Community Rule)** and the **Testament of Asher 1:3–9** (*"two ways God has given the sons of men, two inclinations, two acts, two manners, and two ends"*) — though the specific division into five-good and five-evil is distinctively Meqabyan.

3 *"Furthermore — like the wave of the sea; like the whirlwind that lifts dust from the earth; like the sea-wave that the wind stirs — many thoughts disturb him; uncountable as the drops of rain, as the multitude of his thoughts in his heart — so is the thought of Adam.*

4 *"But your thought is one; you are not flesh; you have no other thought.*

5 *"But you dwelt in the serpent's mind; the one-natured Adam you destroyed by evil flattery. Eve heard the serpent's word; hearing, she did as he commanded her.*

6 *"And coming, she deceived Adam, the first creation of God, by making him eat the fruit of the fig. For transgressing her Creator's commandment, she brought death upon herself and her children.*

7 *"By the true judgment of God, they went out of Paradise. But God, having driven them out, did not separate them from Paradise; rather, in the land to which they were sent, by the fruit of their womb and the fruit of their land, he consoled them.*

8 *"When in your jealousy you had caused them to be sent out of Paradise, God gave them green trees from Paradise — that they might plant and be consoled by the fruit of Paradise and the fruit of earth that God gave them —*

9 *"by seeing children, by seeing Paradise and the fruit which the earth brought forth from dust, that they might greatly gladden their hearts; when they ate of it, they were utterly consoled from the sorrow of having been expelled from Paradise.*

10 *"For God knows how to console his creation; by their children and by the fruit of the earth their hearts are settled.*

11 *"For they are exiled to this land of thorn and bramble; by grain and water they strengthen their hearts."*

Chapter 4

Introduction

Chapter 4 (36 verses, the longest of 3 Mq) is the **theological core** of the book. It develops five major doctrines:

1. **The Christological promise** (v. 1) — the Lord says: *"I shall redeem him; from the wolf's mouth he shall save the lamb."* This is the most explicit messianic promise in the entire trilogy.
2. **The etymology of the Devil's name** (v. 5) — *"You became proud; you were called the Devil; your armies were called demons."* The name is itself the consequence of the fall.
3. **The four-elements composition of Adam's body** (v. 10) — earth, water, fire, and wind — the Empedoclean / Galenic anthropology preserved in Christian patristic literature.
4. **The pre-existence of Adam in the divine mind** (vv. 14–18), with a direct citation of **Proverbs 8:22–31** (Lady Wisdom's pre-creation speech) reapplied to Adam.
5. **The definition of "complete repentance"** (v. 34) — sin + confession + weeping + non-return = full forgiveness.

The Devil is irredeemable not because his sin is greater than Adam's, but because he refuses to confess in repentance. Adam, equally fallen, returns; the Devil cannot.

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1 And his [Adam's] Lord said: *"I shall redeem him; he shall shame you [the Devil];* ***from the wolf's mouth he shall save the lamb****.*

> *Note on 3 Mq 4:1:* Direct Christological promise. The image of *"the lamb saved from the wolf's mouth"* combines **John 10:11–15** (*"the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep… the wolf catches them and scatters the sheep"*) and **Amos 3:12** (*"as the shepherd takes out of the mouth of the lion two legs"*). This is **the most explicit messianic-Christological reading available in the entire Meqabyan trilogy**, anchoring the opening of Ch. 1 (*"the merciful and meek one to come in the latter time"*).
>
> *Philological flag:* The Christological reading here is **Claude's interpretation**, not a settled philological reading. Horovitz 1905 (p. 196) read the text in the opposite direction, observing that *"von Christus nirgends die Rede"* — there is **nowhere any talk of Christ** in Meqabyan, which he understood as deliberately OT-framed. A Jewish-typological reading (the Lamb = Israel, the Wolf = the pagan nations) is fully possible at v. 1; the Christological reading is suggested by but not required by the verse. The opening of Ch. 1 (*"the merciful and meek one"*) is similarly open to a non-Christological messianic reading. See SOURCES.md §6.4 for the contested status of this and several adjacent Christological readings.

2 *"But you — leading those you have ruled with you — shall go to destruction.*

3 *"But those who keep their Creator God's law — that he may make them his portion, that they may praise him with the holy angels who did not transgress their Creator God's law as you did — these shall be glad with their Creator God, who has hidden them from your evil work.*

4 *"But you — when God, who had chosen you above all those like you, made you praise him together with the angels — in your arrogance you lost the high throne.*

5 *"You exalted yourself;* ***you were called the Devil; your armies were called demons****.*

Note on 3 Mq 4:5: **The explicit etymology of the Devil's name.** ዲያብሎስ (Diabolos, the Greek loanword for "slanderer") and አጋንንት (demons) become category-names defined by the rebellion-against-praise act. The verse implies: before pride, this being had a different name and identity; the name "Devil" is itself the *consequence* of the fall, not its cause.

6 *"But those who love God — like the holy angels — become his kindred. The Seraphim and Cherubim who praise him, with wings spread, praise without ceasing.*

7 *"But you — together with your kindred and armies created in your form, who were to praise him always — destroyed your praise through your pride and folly.*

8 *"Thinking that creation was impossible without you — when you forgot the praise of God your Creator — that the praise of God who created you as a tenth tribe might not be lacking — when you separated yourself from the unity of your brothers, that the praise of God might not be lacking,*

Note on 3 Mq 4:8: The reference to the Devil as **"tenth tribe"** (0ሥረኛ ነገድ) of angels implies an angelic hierarchy of ten orders, of which the Devil and his armies were the tenth. The **nine-orders** schema is articulated in **Pseudo-Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy* 6.2** (PG 3:200D), with elaboration in chs. 7–9 (Seraphim/Cherubim/Thrones; Dominations/Powers/Authorities; Principalities/Archangels/Angels); a different ordering, also of nine orders, is given in **Gregory the Great, *Homilies on the Gospels* 34** — uniquely, Gregory's Hom. 34 unites the nine-orders enumeration *with* the lost-drachma/lost-sheep parable of Luke 15 in support of the humans-complete-the-angelic-number doctrine ("since the groat is a coin which bears an image, the woman lost the groat when man, created in the image of God, strayed by sin"). The humans-replace-the-fallen-tenth doctrine is also stated in **Augustine, *Enchiridion* Ch. IX (§§28–30)** and **Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* I.16–18**. The two strands (nine orders + humans completing the number) are routinely combined in late-antique and early-medieval Christian thought. The doctrine is preserved in the EOTC's ***Mäṣḥafä Mäla'ek*** (Book of the Angels).

9 *"when in the arrogance of your mind you neglected the praise of God your Creator — when he was angry with you and mocked you, when together with your armies he expelled you to the grinding of Gehenna —*

10 *"with his holy hands he took earth from the ground; he added **water and fire and wind**; and **he created Adam in his image and likeness**.*

Note on 3 Mq 4:10: The composition of Adam's body from **the four elements — earth, water, fire, and wind** — is the **Empedoclean / Galenic** Greek natural-philosophical anthropology, mediated to Ethiopian Christianity via Syriac and Coptic patristic literature. See also **2 Mq 14:19** for the same doctrine in resurrection context. The four elements are the body; the breath is the soul.

11 *"That his praise might be filled by your deficiency, he appointed him over all the creation he had made with his hand. The earthly praise was joined to the heavenly praise; their praise became equal.*

12 *"But you — through your pride and your hardness of neck — were banished; you went out from the lordship of God who created you; you destroyed yourself.*

13 *"That his Godhead's praise might not be lacking, God by the counsel of his will created the one who praises him. Know that his praise shall not be lacking.*

14 *"For he knows all before it is done; he knew that you would break his commandment before he created you. Before the world was made, the counsel was hidden with him; when you denied him, he created his servant Adam in his image and likeness.*

15 *"As Solomon said: 'Before the hills he begot me; before the world was made firm; before the foundation of the earth was laid;*

16 *"'before the prop of mountains and hills was planted; before the way of the world was established; before the light of sun and moon shone; before the food of stars and seasons was known;*

17 *"'before night and day alternated; before the sea was bounded with sand; before all created creation was created;*

18 *"'before all that is seen today was seen; before all the name that is called today was called — he begot me.' So also, you and the angels like you, and his servant Adam, were within the consciousness of God.*

> *Note on 3 Mq 4:15–18:* Direct citation of **Proverbs 8:22–31** (Lady Wisdom's pre-creation speech: *"the LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth"*) — but here applied to **Adam and the angels** as well. Lady Wisdom's pre-creation existence becomes the model for the pre-existence-in-the-divine-mind of all creation. This is a distinctive theological move: in mainstream Christian tradition Prov 8:22–31 is typically applied to the Logos/Christ (the central text in the 4th-century Arian controversy). Meqabyan universalizes the pre-existence claim to all rational creatures.

19 *"When you denied [him], that his holy name might be praised — that he might be praised in his servant Adam who was humbled, whom he created from earth — when you exalted yourself, he created Adam.*

20 *"For God hears the prayer of the poor from afar; God loves the praise of humbled people.*

21 *"God disregards the matter of the proud; he does not love the strength of the horse; he is not glad in the strength of a man.*

> *Note on 3 Mq 4:21:* Direct echo of **Psalm 147:10** (*"he delights not in the strength of the horse: he takes not pleasure in the legs of a man"*).

22 *"But God is glad in those who fear him and cry out weeping for their sin.*

23 *"You — you could not confess in repentance.*

24 *"But that earthly one [Adam], weeping greatly before God for his sin, returned in repentance.*

25 *"You — in the pride of your heart and the hardness of your neck — did not know the way of peace; you did not know repentance; in repentance, weeping, and tears you could not confess before your Creator God.*

26 *"But that poor one of ash and earth returned with weeping and tears to the way of repentance, peace, and humility.*

27 *"You — to God who created you, you did not humble yourself or the inner husk of your heart.*

28 *"But he, having transgressed his transgression, humbled himself and confessed; he did not exalt himself.*

29 *"And that error — he did not create it; it came from you. You created the crime and brought it out; in your pride, you took him with you to your destruction.*

30 *"For he knew both of you before he created you; he knew your walk; he knows that this was done in the pride of your heart.*

31 *"But that one — without the cunning of pride — he returned through repentance, weeping, and tears.*

32 *"You — in the pride of your heart — could not confess in repentance. The man who sins and does not confess in repentance makes his sin worse than his former transgression.*

33 *"But the man who sins and confesses and weeps before his Creator God — he has truly repented; that he might soften his Lord's heart, he has found the way of salvation; before his Lord he confesses; his Lord eases what he had counseled to be angry over the servant; in much repentance and prostration he has confessed; his former sin is forgiven.*

34 *"If he does not return to his previous transgression — if he does this — this is* ***complete repentance****. And Adam did not forget remembering his Creator and confessing to his Creator.*

> *Note on 3 Mq 4:34:* The definition of **"complete repentance" (ፍጹም ንስሓ, *feṣṣum nesseḥa*)** — sin + confession + weeping + non-return = full forgiveness — is the EOTC's canonical penitential theology, codified later in the **Fetha Nagast** (Law of Kings, 13th-c.) and the Ethiopian monastic literature. This verse is the **theological foundation** of EOTC sacramental confession. The Devil cannot repent — not because God will not forgive him, but because pride forbids confession; Adam can — because humility permits it.

35 *"You also — confess to your Creator in repentance; multiply not transgression against him and against the work of his hand. For they are flesh and blood; God who created them knows their weakness.*

36 *“After their soul is separated, their flesh becomes dust until the day God shall please.”*

Chapter 5

Introduction

Chapter 5 (16 verses) is the **transitional chapter** of 3 Mq — moving from the angelological prologue (Chs. 1–4) to the ethical exhortation that occupies the rest of the book (Chs. 5–10). The chapter is addressed to “you” — now the human reader rather than the Devil. Themes: remember your Creator; the earth is your origin and destination; weigh your good and evil deeds; do not bear false witness; do not commit fraud in commercial weights; do not seize others’ wealth by violence. The closing verses (vv. 10–11) contain direct citations of **Psalm 39:6** and the **Ecclesiastes-vanity** tradition.

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1 Know your Creator; do not forget the Holy One of Israel who has strengthened you and saved you. When you were earth, he created you in his image and likeness — that you might be glad, he set you in Paradise to till the ground.

2 When you transgressed his commandment, he brought you out from Paradise into this land cursed for your sake, which brings forth bramble and thorn.

3 For you are earth, and she is earth; you are dust, and she is dust; you are ground, and she is ground. From her you eat; to her you return; you become dust until he wills to raise you. For he shall examine all the iniquity and sin you have done.

4 Know what you shall answer in that time. Remember the evil and good you have done in this world; weigh and consider whether the evil is greater or the good is greater.

5 If you have multiplied good, it shall be well with you, that you may rejoice and exult on the day the dead rise.

6 But if you have multiplied evil, woe to you! As your hands’ work and your heart’s wickedness, you shall receive your recompense — as you have done evil to your neighbor, as you have not feared God — as your work, you shall receive your recompense.

7 If you have betrayed your neighbor — if you have sworn falsely in the name of God — as your work, you shall receive your recompense.

8 Pretending to your neighbor, you make your false word seem true; but you yourself know that you have spoken falsehood.

9 Convincing those with you, you firm up your word as truth; you multiply what is not true; as your work, you shall receive your recompense. Saying *“I will give you what I do not give,”* you betray your neighbor.

10 When in pure heart you said *“I will give,”* demons surround you like dogs; they make you forget all things; whether you rise to give or wish to give — the wealth of this world makes you covet, that you may fatten yourself on wealth which does not profit you and which you cannot eat. For he has said: ***“They gather; and do not know for whom they gather.”***

> *Note on 3 Mq 5:10:* Direct citation of **Psalm 39:6** (*“surely every man walks in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heaps up riches, and knows not who shall gather them”*); closely related to **Ecclesiastes 2:18–23** (*“yet shall he leave it unto the man that shall be after him”*).

11 Again — *“the lying sons of Adam make the balance false; they go always from vanity to vanity”* — as he has said.

> *Note on 3 Mq 5:11:* Compound citation: **Hosea 12:7** (*“he loves to oppress; the balances of deceit are in his hand”*), **Psalm 62:9** (*“surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie”*), and **Ecclesiastes 1:2** (*“vanity of vanities; all is vanity”*).

12 O people — by tampering with the balance and the weight-stone; by stealing the wealth of others and by violence adding to your own wealth; by trespassing on your neighbor's property and field; by making for yourselves the profit that does not belong to your neighbor — do not place your hope in violence.

13 If you do this, as your work you shall receive.

14 O people — eat fittingly by the work of your hand; do not trust in plunder. By unfitting, judgment-less seizing and snatching, do not love to eat another's wealth.

15 Though you eat it, it does not satisfy you; though you fatten on it, in the time of your death you leave it to another; it does not profit you.

16 Though your wealth abounds, do not be proud in mind. The wealth of sinners is like the smoke from a furnace which the wind takes; **a little wealth in truth is better than much wealth of sinners**.

> *Note on 3 Mq 5:16:* Direct echo of **Psalm 37:16** (*"a little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked"*) and **Proverbs 15:16** (*"better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith"*).

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Chapter 6

Introduction

Chapter 6 (16 verses) is the ***memento mori*** chapter. It opens with the death-meditation: remember the day your soul will leave your body. The reception of souls at death by **angels of mercy** (for the righteous) and **demons** (for sinners) is laid out (vv. 5–6), paralleling 2 Mq 20:10–12. The chapter then warns against gluttony with a direct citation of **Deuteronomy 32:15** (the Song of Moses, *"Jeshurun grew fat and kicked"*), and closes with **Proverbs 28:1** (*"the wicked flee when no one pursues; the righteous is bold as a lion"*).

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1 Remember the day of your death; when your souls are separated from your bodies, when you leave your wealth to another, when you go to a way you do not know — think of what comes upon you.

2 Those who receive you are evil; in form they are misshapen; in their fierceness they terrify; they do not hear your word, and you do not hear their word.

3 Because you did not do the will of God your God, when you petition them, they do not answer you; for this reason they terrify you greatly.

4 Demons fear them — but to people who fulfill God's will, there is no fear in them. The demons mock the souls of sinners.

5 Because they despised this world — for this greatly gladdens them — the souls of righteous people rejoice at the chant of angels. But the souls of sinners — evil angels receive them.

6 To settle the souls of the righteous, **angels of mercy** are sent from God; they receive the souls of the righteous and good. But evil demons receive the souls of sinners — sent from the Devil that they may mock the souls of sinners.

> *Note on 3 Mq 6:5–6:* The doctrine of **angels of mercy** receiving the righteous souls vs. **demons** receiving the wicked at death parallels **2 Mq 20:10–12**. The motif is well-developed in the **Apocalypse of Paul §§14–18** (the soul-journey at death), **Testament of Abraham**, and the patristic *ars moriendi* tradition.

7 Sinners, woe to you! Before the day of your death reaches you, weep for yourselves; after your death, the time that has passed does not return.

8 Rather, before your time has passed — while you are still here — enter repentance, that when you arrive before God's face you may dwell without affliction and without disease, in joy.

9 Lest the worthless will that estranges you from God draw you away — let there not be found in you sharp reproach and luxurious living, the love of food and pleasure. For a body sated beyond measure does not remember the name of God; rather the spirit of the Devil dwells in it, not the spirit of life.

10 As Moses said: ***"Jacob ate and was satisfied; he grew fat, he grew thick, he grew broad; he abandoned God who created him;***

11 ***and his life departed from God."*** For unmeasured gorging of the belly is to be like an untamed horse; for unmeasured eating and drinking and adultery is to be like a wild pig of the desert.

> *Note on 3 Mq 6:10–11:* Direct citation of **Deuteronomy 32:15** (the Song of Moses, *"Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked: you became fat, you became thick, you became sleek; then he forsook God who made him"*). The expansion *"like an untamed horse"* and *"like a wild pig of the desert"* extends the Mosaic image with characteristic Geʿez vividness.

12 But the one who eats with measure is firm on the foundation of God; like the cornerstone, like a fortified wall, he stands firm. For it is said: ***"The sinner flees when no one pursues him."***

> *Note on 3 Mq 6:12:* Direct citation of **Proverbs 28:1** (*"the wicked flee when no one pursues: but the righteous are bold as a lion"*).

13 But the righteous lives bounding like a lion.

14 But people who do not love God do not keep his word; their mind is not straight.

15 And God — that, while they are on earth, they may not rest — by trembling and fear, by the seizing of their wealth, by countless many afflictions held — bound in chains from the hand of their lords —

16 lest they be at rest from the affliction, lest their dwelling be in peace, in various terrifying afflictions, brings sorrow and panic upon them.

Chapter 7

Introduction

The shortest chapter in 3 Mq (5 verses). A brief interlude on **trust in God** in the midst of distress, citing **Psalm 56:11; Psalm 27:3–4; 1 Samuel 2:30**. The chapter closes with a charge to protect widows (v. 5) — the standard OT righteousness-marker.

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1 As David said: ***"In God I have trusted; I will not fear; what shall man do to me?"*** — In people who trust in God there is no fear or panic.

> *Note on 3 Mq 7:1:* Direct citation of **Psalm 56:11** (*"in God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me"*); also quoted in **Hebrews 13:6**.

2 Again he said: *"Though warriors should surround me, in him I trusted; one thing I asked of God; that I seek; he who trusted in him shall live forever; from evil he shall not fear."*

> *Note on 3 Mq 7:2:* Composite citation of **Psalm 27:3–4** (*"though an host should encamp against me… one thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after"*).

3 Who is the man who trusted in God and was put to shame? Who is the one God has called and rejected?

4 ***“Those who love me, I will love; those who honor me, I will honor; those who turn to me, I will keep”*** — he has said. Who is the man who has hoped in him and been put to shame?

> *Note on 3 Mq 7:4:* Composite citation. *“Those who honor me, I will honor”* = **1 Samuel 2:30**. *“I love those who love me”* = **Proverbs 8:17**.

5 Save the body of the widow; from all who oppose you with evil, save them — that God may save you. Protect them; after you, he shall protect your children. For the children of the righteous are blessed; they give from their excess; they do not lack grain.

Chapter 8

Introduction

Chapter 8 (12 verses) is the **Job-as-model** chapter. Job’s endurance under suffering and his confession (Job 1:21) becomes the paradigm; the chapter climaxes (vv. 7–8) with a **roll call of biblical heroes** — Esther and Mordecai, Judith and Gideon, Barak and Deborah, Samson and Jephthah — paralleling the cloud-of-witnesses tradition of **Hebrews 11** and **Sirach 44**. The inclusion of **Judith** explicitly affirms her status within the Ethiopian OT canon. The chapter closes with the Hannah-of-Samuel *“the LORD kills and makes alive”* formula of **1 Samuel 2:6–8**.

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1 Job trusted in God; for he did not neglect to praise God his Creator — [God] saved him from all the affliction the Devil, enemy of the sons of Adam, brought upon him. In the affliction that came upon him, he did not grieve his heart. Rather he said: ***“The LORD gave; the LORD has taken; the LORD has done as he wished; in all things, in heaven and earth, let the name of the LORD be praised.”***

> *Note on 3 Mq 8:1:* Direct citation of **Job 1:21** (*“the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD”*) — one of the most-quoted single verses in liturgical Christianity.

2 When God saw that Job’s heart was pure, God received him with much glory.

3 He gave him wealth more abundant than his former wealth; for he had become very patient — because he endured all the affliction that came upon him, he healed him of his wound.

4 So also you — if you endure the enemies sent to you, you become blessed.

5 Endure! Lest because of the affliction that has come upon you from people who hate you, you grieve your mind — that, for you and after you for your children and your children’s children, he may be a refuge to you.

6 Trust him; he shall be your refuge. Call upon him; he shall hear you. Hope in him; he shall pardon you. Petition him; he shall be a father to you.

7 Remember **Esther and Mordecai, Judith and Gideon, Barak and Deborah, Samson and Jephthah** —

8 and others like them, who hardened themselves to trust in God; whose enemies did not overcome them.

> *Note on 3 Mq 8:7–8:* This **roll call of biblical heroes** parallels **Hebrews 11:32** (*“Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets”*) and **Sirach 44** (the “praise of the famous ancestors”). Note the inclusion of **Judith** (Yehudit), heroine of the deuterocanonical Book of Judith — affirming **Judith’s status within the Ethiopian Old Testament canon** (which includes Judith). **Esther and Mordecai** (Book of Esther) and **Deborah** (Judges 4–5) are paired with male counterparts — making this list selectively **female-inclusive** in comparison to Hebrews 11. This pairing-of-genders is a distinctively Ethiopian editorial touch.

9 For God is true; he does not show partiality of face. Those who chose to do evil against them — they received evil. But all those who fear him and do righteousness — he keeps their souls; he gives them honor and intimacy.

10 In their going in and coming out, in their death and their life, in their sitting and their rising — he gladdens them. ***For he saves and he kills.***

11 ***He strikes; he pardons.***

12 ***He makes poor; he makes rich; he humbles; he glorifies.***

> *Note on 3 Mq 8:10–12:* Direct echo of **1 Samuel 2:6–8** (the Song of Hannah: *"the LORD kills and makes alive; he brings down to Sheol and brings up; the LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and lifts up"*). This is also the source of the Magnificat (Luke 1:51–53) and was a major liturgical hymn-prototype in early Christian worship.

Chapter 9

Introduction

Chapter 9 (36 verses, tied with Ch. 4 for the longest in 3 Mq) is a **cosmological-sapiential** chapter on God's incomprehensible wisdom and lordship. Major citations include the **way-of-the-eagle / serpent / ship** triad of **Proverbs 30:18–19** (vv. 1–3); the ***"who has known the mind of the Lord"*** of **Romans 11:33–34 / Isaiah 40:13** (vv. 10–12); the **earth-on-water / heaven-on-wind** cosmogony (v. 12); the **anti-idolatry polemic** (vv. 28–32); and the closing (vv. 33–36) which sets up the resurrection-eschatology that fills the final chapter. The chapter is the **theological foundation** of the closing chapter's resurrection-doctrine.

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1 Whether in heaven or on earth, whether the subtle or the solid — all is his; all by his ordinance stands and abides.

2 None transgresses the law and commandment of the Creator of the whole world; **the path of the eagle that flies in heaven** — to where he wills, he commands his going.

3 The way of the serpent in the rock — where he wills, he commands him. **The way of a ship in the midst of the sea** — none knows its way except God alone.

> *Note on 3 Mq 9:2–3:* Direct citation of **Proverbs 30:18–19** (Agur the son of Jakeh: *"there be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid"*). Meqabyan omits the fourth member (*"way of a man with a maid"*) and replaces it with the divine sovereignty motif — a Christianizing edit.

4 Whether the soul of the righteous or the soul of the sinner, after she is separated from her flesh — none knows the way the soul takes except God alone.

5 Whether she goes around in the wilderness or on the mountain — who knows where she goes? Whether she flies like a bird; whether she descends upon the cleft of the mountain; whether she becomes like **the dew of Hermon**;

> *Note on 3 Mq 9:5:* **Dew of Hermon** — direct echo of **Psalm 133:3** (*"as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion"*) — the classic OT image of blessing.

6 whether she becomes like the whirlwind; whether she becomes like lightning that straightens her path;

7 whether she becomes like the stars that shine over the deep; whether she becomes like the sand of the seashore heaped in the midst of the deep;

8 whether she becomes like the cornerstone fixed on the edge of the sea's depth; whether she becomes like a tree planted by the water-channels that gives lovely fruit;

9 whether the sun's heat burns her, and the wind picks her up and carries her to another place where she does not sprout — whose trace is not found, becoming like grass; whose trace is not found, becoming like mist of urine — who knows?

10 ***Who knows the way of God? Who are his counselors? With whom does he take counsel?***

11 ***For the thought of God is hidden from man; who pursues his trace?***

12 ***Who can examine God's counsel and his wisdom?*** **For he founded the earth on the water; he established her without a peg**; in his complete wisdom, he firmed up the heaven on the wind; he stretched out the male-water [oceans] like a tent.

> *Note on 3 Mq 9:10–12:* Direct echo of **Romans 11:33–36** (*"who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counsellor?"*), itself a quotation of **Isaiah 40:13** and **Jeremiah 23:18**. The image of **God founding the earth upon water** parallels **Psalm 24:2** (*"he has founded it upon the seas"*) and **Psalm 136:6** (*"to him that stretched out the earth above the waters"*). The phrase **"male-water"** (ተባዕታዊ ውኃ) for the upper oceans is a Geʿez astronomical-cosmological term contrasted with "female-water" (the springs below) — a creation-account variation preserved in the *Mäṣḥafä Aksumawi* (Aksumite Book) and Ethiopian computus tradition.

13 And he commanded the clouds to rain rain upon the earth; he causes grass to grow, and countless fruits — that they might be food for man, that we might rejoice in God together.

14 God gives to the sons of men all his blessing, his joy, and his satisfaction — this is that they may be sated and praise God who gave them from the fruit of the earth.

15 The lovely garment he has put on them; all the desired blessing; the joy and gladness given to those who fulfill the will of God — he gives them.

16 And to those who keep the commandment of God — in the dwelling he prepared for their fathers in heaven — he gives glory and beloved-ness and gladness.

17 To those who lived in his worship and his judgment — who kept his law and sought his ordinance, who kept and provided for them, who raised and honored them, who did not depart from his commandment — he gives glory and grace. And I — by causing their enemies to weaken, by guarding their bodies — saw what God does for his beloved in this world.

18 All things, as they ask, he gives them, and fulfills their will. Do not depart from God's commandment; fulfill the will of God.

19 Lest he be angry with you, lest in one moment he destroy you, lest in his wrath he strike you, lest you go out from the inheritance of your fathers where you formerly were, lest your dwelling forever be Gehenna where there is no exit — do not depart from his commandment and his law.

20 When you stand before God, that your work may be good — while your soul is not separated from your flesh — keep the will of God your Creator.

21 For the kingdom of heaven and earth is his alone; almighty power and kingship are his; mercy and pardon are his alone.

22 ***He makes rich; he makes poor; he humbles; he honors.***

23 And David said concerning him: *"Man is like vanity; his days pass like a shadow.*

24 *"O Lord, but you abide forever; the calling of your name is to generation upon generation."*

> *Note on 3 Mq 9:23–24:* Composite citation of **Psalm 144:4** (*"man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passes away"*) and **Psalm 102:11–12** (*"my days are like a shadow that declines… but thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations"*).

25 Again he said: *"Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your rule is to generation upon generation"* — you have taken kingship from Saul and given it to David.

> *Note on 3 Mq 9:25:* Direct citation of **Psalm 145:13** (*"your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom"*). The reference to taking kingship from Saul and giving it to David alludes to **1 Samuel 15:28; 16:1**.

26 But you — there is no one who appoints you; there is no one able to depose you; there is no one able to see you; but you — you see all.

27 Your kingdom — for generation upon generation, forever, is not deposed; there is none who rules him; but he — he rules all; sees all.

28 That they may praise him without doubt and with straight mind know his worship — that they may not be those who, instead of God alone who created them, provided for them, honored them, raised them — bow down to other gods — for he created man in his image and likeness; **he examines heart and reins**.

> *Note on 3 Mq 9:28:* **"He examines heart and reins"** is direct citation of **Psalm 7:9** (*"for the righteous God tries the hearts and reins"*) and **Jeremiah 17:10** (*"I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins"*); also echoed in **Revelation 2:23** (*"I am he that searches the reins and hearts"*).

29 But they refuse to worship God who created them; to stone and wood, and to silver and gold made by human hand, they bow down.

30 And they sacrifice to them, until the smoke of their sacrifice rises to heaven there to stand before God; he shall accuse them of all the sin they have done in their idolatry.

31 They did not keep the commandment of God they had been taught. Rather they learned idol-worship, every defiling work that is not fitting; astrology and divination and idolatry; evil will and every work God does not love.

32 That they might be praised in the presence of God and his angels — that they might save their bodies from sin and iniquity — because they did not love to praise God — for lack of good work they do all this.

33 When all together are raised from the tomb where they were buried and where their bones decayed, their soul stands naked before God; the soul shall dwell in the houses of light prepared for the good.

34 But the soul of sinners shall dwell in darkness. When the tombs open, the bodies rise; the souls return to the bodies from which they were first separated.

35 Naked, as they were born naked, they stand before God; the sin they have done from their infancy unto that time shall be revealed.

36 They shall bear their sin on their shoulder; whether little or much sin they have done, as they have done, so they shall receive.

Chapter 10

Introduction

The **closing chapter of 3 Meqabyan and of the entire trilogy** (29 verses). The chapter opens (vv. 1–8) with the **resurrection-by-analogy** argument: as God creates souls without parents through his Spirit hovering over the waters (Gen 1:2), so he raises the dead by his word. The day-of-judgment description follows (vv. 9–13). Then a **Matthew 25-style beatitudes-list of works of mercy** (vv. 14–22): feed the hungry, clothe the naked, defend the wronged, teach the sinner, fight demons through fasting and prayer. The summary virtues (vv. 22–23) — *"purity, wisdom, knowledge, loving your neighbor as yourself, not returning evil for evil"* — synthesize OT and NT ethics.

The closing (vv. 24–29) is the **final warning** against the Devil's lie that there is no resurrection, and the call to prepare for migration *"from this earthly light to heavenly light."* The book ends (v. 29) with the doxological formula **"From today and unto eternity, Amen"** — identical to 2 Mq 21:28, marking the **definitive end of the entire Meqabyan trilogy**.

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1 If you have not believed the resurrection of the dead, hear how, in winter, unborn souls rise; for the Spirit of God, breathed upon them as before, rests upon them.

2 And to die, by his word, he commanded them aforetime.

3 Their flesh decaying, as he wills they rise; again they are renewed.

4 Again, when rain falls and saturates the earth, they rise; as was prepared from of old, they live.

5 Those that live by living-soul; all that moves on earth, and all that water brings forth — he commanded, and they were created. For **the Spirit of God hovered over the water**; by his Spirit and his word he gives them living-soul.

> *Note on 3 Mq 10:5:* Direct echo of **Genesis 1:2** (*"and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"*).

6 You blind-of-heart, who say *"the dead do not rise"* — look: by his Spirit and his word, without father and mother, they are created. If you have wisdom, how do you say that the dead are not raised by the word of God their Creator?

7 Repent, and return to your faith. For the dead — who in the grave have become ash and dust — by the word of God shall rise.

8 As his word formerly said, by the dew of pardon from God they rise; that word, encompassing all, raises the dead as he wills.

9 Know that, raised, you shall stand before him; do not think according to your thought that you remain in the grave.

10 It is not so — but as you have done on earth, whether good or evil, raised, you shall receive your wage; for it is the day of recompense.

11 At the resurrection, in all the sin you have done, you shall receive your recompense; from your infancy to that time, the written debt of yours you shall complete; you have no excuse — as in the work of this world — by which to deny your sin.

12 As you make your false word seem true to your face, as you make the false thing you have spoken seem true — there you have no excuse by which to plead.

13 For she [the soul] — knowing all the evil you have done — shall reveal you before God her Creator; for the word of God dwelling in you shall speak against you.

14 And there, for the sin you have done, you shall be ashamed. That you may be praised with those who are praised for their good work — not be ashamed on the day of judgment before the angels and people — hasten here to enter into repentance before you arrive there.

15 Those who praise God with the angels receive their wage from their Creator without shame; they are glad. But while you are alive in your flesh, if you have not done good work, you have no portion with the righteous.

16 When you had knowledge — when you had wage and market — you did not prepare yourself. When you had wealth, you did not give a morsel to the hungry — worthless repentance shall be yours.

17 When you had clothing, you did not clothe the naked; when you had authority, you did not save the oppressed.

18 When you had knowledge, you did not teach the sinner — that he might return and enter repentance; that God might forgive the sin he had done in ignorance. When you had strength, with which to overcome — you did not fight the demons who war against you.

19 When you had firmness, that you might weaken the strength of your infancy that is in flesh, that you might subject yourself to righteousness, not to please the flesh in the world — you did not fast; you did not pray.

> *Note on 3 Mq 10:14–19:* The catalog of **works-of-mercy and ascetic acts** — feed the hungry (v. 16), clothe the naked (v. 17), defend the oppressed (v. 17), teach the sinner (v. 18), fight demons (v. 18), fast and pray (v. 19) — closely parallels **Matthew 25:31–46** (*"I was hungry and you gave me food… naked and you clothed me… sick and in prison and you visited me"*) and **Isaiah 58:6–10** (*"to loose the bands of wickedness… to deal your bread to the hungry"*). The integration of **social works-of-mercy** with **personal asceticism (fasting and prayer)** is characteristic of late-antique and EOTC moral theology, and finds its full institutional development in the Ethiopian monastic *gädl* (saints' lives) tradition.

20 Not in worldly joy, in sweet foods and excellent drink — not in fine clothing or adornment with gold and silver —

21 not in honored gems of India, in topaz and emerald: this is not the fitting adornment of man.

22 For man — his adornment is **purity, wisdom, and knowledge; without jealousy and without envy; without doubt and without quarrel; loving one another fittingly.**

23 Loving your neighbor as yourself, not returning evil for evil to the man who has done evil to you — that you may enter into the dwelling given to those who have endured affliction; that, with those who have inherited the holy land by patience and knowledge, hoping for the Kingdom of Heaven at the resurrection, your wage may be given to you.

> *Note on 3 Mq 10:22–23:* The summary virtues — *"purity, wisdom, knowledge; without jealousy and without envy; loving your neighbor as yourself; not returning evil for evil"* — are a Christianized synthesis of OT and NT ethics. ***"Love your neighbor as yourself"*** is direct citation of **Leviticus 19:18 / Matthew 22:39 / Romans 13:9 / Galatians 5:14 / James 2:8**. ***"Not returning evil for evil"*** is from **Romans 12:17 / 1 Thessalonians 5:15 / 1 Peter 3:9**. The compound formula is the EOTC's canonical moral summary.

24 ***"After we die, we shall not rise"*** — do not say this. For the Devil makes those who say and think this lose hope, that at the resurrection they may not be saved. When the resurrection has reached them, they shall know. People who have done sin in ignorance — at the resurrection they shall utterly grieve, because they did not believe that on that day they would rise. He shall hold their sin against them.

25 Therefore, for the work they did on earth — for its evil — they shall be reproached; the resurrection by which they rise in flesh together — which they denied — they shall see.

26 Because they did not order their work well, they shall weep then. If they could — that they might not be those who weep there — if they had wept in this world, it would have been better for them.

27 If here, by our will, we do not weep — there, against our will, they shall make us weep. If here we do not prepare repentance — there, worthless and unprofitable shouting and weeping we shall prepare.

28 That you may pass over **from death to life — from this passing world to the Kingdom of Heaven above — from this earthly light to the heavenly light** — prepare good work.

29 That with the people who believe the resurrection of the dead, in the Kingdom of Heaven in unending joy, you may be glad — refuse the joy that is on earth. **From today and unto eternity. Amen.**

> *Note on 3 Mq 10:29:* The closing formula ከዛሬ ጀምሮ እስከ ዘለዓለም አሜን (*"From today and unto eternity, Amen"*) is **identical** to the closing of **2 Meqabyan 21:28**. The two later books share a single-Amen closing, in contrast to **1 Meqabyan 36:46**'s double-Amen (*"Amen, Amen"*). This marks **the definitive end of 3 Meqabyan AND of the entire Meqabyan trilogy**.

End of the Third Book of Meqabyan

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End of the Meqabyan Trilogy

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Translator's closing note on 3 Meqabyan:

This translation of 3 Meqabyan completes the present CC0 English rendering of the three Ethiopian Books of Meqabyan, prepared by Claude (Anthropic), May 2026, from the modern Amharic of the EOTC Bible (nehemiah-osc.org compilation). It is **not peer-reviewed**, **not collated against the Geʿez original**, and represents a **single-witness, AI-assisted draft** intended as a starting point for serious scholarly translation work.

The ten chapters of 3 Meqabyan can be summarized in three movements:

1. **Chs. 1–4 — Angelological prologue.** The book opens with the most theologically distinctive composition in the entire EOTC corpus: a **dialogue between the Devil and God**. Chapter 1 contains a **first-person speech of the Devil** (vv. 3–15) narrating his strategies of deception — wealth, beautiful women, gems, divinations through stars, clouds, fire, and animal cries — climaxing in the **Satan-refused-to-bow-to-Adam tradition** (1:15), the most explicit Geʿez attestation of this widely-paralleled motif (*Vita Adae et Evae* §§12–17 [Latin recension]; 2 Enoch 29:4–5 [longer rec. J; cf. 31:3–6]; Cave of Treasures §2; the proximate Geʾez recipient *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*; Qur'an cluster 2:34, 7:11–18, 15:28–38, 17:61, 18:50, 20:116, 38:71–78; on the Jewish side, Bereshit Rabbati 24–25 [Albeck 1940]). The Devil's petition to God (1:17–21), unique in Geʿez literature, asks that those he deceived share his punishment and that those who refused him receive his crown — a **theodicy-by-consent**. Chapter 2 develops the **doctrine that Adam was created to replace the fallen angels in the praise of God** (2:11–12, parallel to Augustine *Enchiridion* §29 and Anselm *Cur Deus Homo* I.16–18) and closes with the distinctive ten-fold gloss on **the ten-stringed psaltery of Pss 33:2 / 92:3 / 144:9** applied to inner Adamic faculties (2:23, on which see the verse-note: the dominant Ethiopian decimal symbolism is the **Decalogue** via the begena lyre tradition). Chapter 3 contrasts the Devil's single thought with Adam's many thoughts (parallels 1QS 3–4; Test. Asher 1:3–9). Chapter 4 is the **theological core**: the **messianic-and/or-Christological promise** *"I shall redeem him; from the wolf's mouth he shall save the lamb"* (4:1, John 10:11–15 + Amos 3:12 + Isa 11:6 — though Horovitz's *"von Christus nirgends die Rede"* must be kept in mind: see the verse-note); the **etymology of the Devil's name** (4:5); the **four-elements composition of Adam's body** (4:10, Hellenistic commonplace); the **pre-existence of Adam in the divine mind** with direct citation of Proverbs 8:22–31 reapplied to Adam (4:15–18, a creative midrashic move); and the definition of **"complete repentance"** (4:34, *feṣṣum nesseḥa*) — the theological foundation of EOTC sacramental confession.

2. **Chs. 5–8 — Ethical exhortation.** The middle chapters turn from the Devil to the human reader. Chapter 5 warns against fraud, false oaths, theft, and trust in wealth (5:10 cites Ps 39:6; 5:11 compounds Hos 12:7 + Ps 62:9 + Eccl 1:2). Chapter 6 is the *memento mori* chapter with the **angels of mercy vs. demons of darkness** at death (6:5–6), the Deuteronomy 32:15 gluttony warning (6:10–11),

and the Prov 28:1 lion-of-righteousness image (6:12). Chapter 7 (shortest, 5 verses) cites Ps 56:11; Ps 27:3–4; 1 Sam 2:30. Chapter 8 is the **Job-as-model chapter** with the direct Job 1:21 citation (*"the LORD gave, the LORD has taken"*) and the **cloud-of-witnesses roll call** (8:7–8) — *Esther and Mordecai, Judith and Gideon, Barak and Deborah, Samson and Jephthah* — paralleling Heb 11:32 (the cited names) + Heb 12:1 (the "cloud of witnesses" phrase) and Sir 44, and confirming **Judith's status in the Ethiopian OT canon**. Closes with the 1 Sam 2:6–8 / Song of Hannah formula.

3. **Chs. 9–10 — Cosmological wisdom and resurrection eschatology.** Chapter 9 is the cosmological-sapiential chapter: *way of the eagle / serpent / ship* of Prov 30:18–19 (9:2–3); *"who has known the mind of the LORD"* of Rom 11:33–34 / Isa 40:13 (9:10–12); earth-on-water cosmogony (9:12); anti-idolatry polemic (9:28–32); the *"he examines heart and reins"* of Ps 7:9 / Jer 17:10 (9:28); the dignified Pauline-style affirmation of God's incomprehensible sovereignty. Chapter 10 — **the closing chapter** — gives the **resurrection-by-analogy argument** (souls created in winter by the Spirit of God hovering over water, Gen 1:2; 10:5), the day-of-judgment description (10:9–13), the **Matt 25 / Isa 58 catalog of works of mercy and ascetic acts** (10:14–19), the synthesis of OT-NT ethics in *"love your neighbor as yourself"* + *"not returning evil for evil"* (10:22–23, Lev 19:18 + Rom 12:17 etc), the final warning against the Devil's lie of "no resurrection" (10:24), and the **closing doxology** *"From today and unto eternity, Amen"* (10:29) — identical to 2 Mq 21:28, marking the final Amen of the trilogy.

The most dating-significant features of 3 Meqabyan are:

1. **Ch. 1:1** Christian-messianic prologue ("the merciful and meek one to come in the latter time… the islands of Egypt rejoice") — strongly Christian-era;
2. **Ch. 1:15** Satan-refused-to-bow-to-Adam tradition — parallels *Vita Adae* (Latin) §§12–17, 2 Enoch 29:4–5 (long rec. J), Cave of Treasures §2, *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (Ge'ez), Qur'an seven-verse cluster (2:34; 7:11–18; 15:28–38; 17:61; 18:50; 20:116; 38:71–78), Bereshit Rabbati 24–25 (1st–11th c. range);
3. **Ch. 1:17–21** Devil's petition-to-God dialogue — unique in Geʿez literature, indicates sophisticated theological-dialectical milieu;
4. **Ch. 2:11–12** Adam-replaces-fallen-angels doctrine — Augustinian-Anselmian, characteristic of late-antique to early-medieval theology;
5. **Ch. 2:23** ten Consciousnesses doctrine — Geʿez theological development; possible parallel in the 15th-c. *Mäṣḥafä Məsṭir* of Giyorgis of Sägla, though specific articulation in that work would require collation;
6. **Ch. 4:1** explicit Christological promise — most explicit messianic line in the trilogy;
7. **Ch. 4:10** four-elements body composition — Hellenistic-Christian;
8. **Ch. 4:15–18** Prov 8:22–31 applied to Adam — theologically distinctive (cf. Arian controversy 4th c.);
9. **Ch. 4:34** "complete repentance" doctrine — formal penitential theology;
10. **Ch. 8:7** inclusion of Judith — confirms Ethiopian OT canon (4th c. and later);
11. **Ch. 9:10–12** Rom 11:33–34 citation — NT-era;
12. **Ch. 10:5** Gen 1:2 explicit citation;
13. **Ch. 10:14–19** Matt 25 works-of-mercy catalog — NT-era moral theology;
14. **Ch. 10:22–23** Lev 19:18 / Rom 12:17 ethical compound — Christian-synthetic;
15. **Ch. 10:29** closing doxology identical to 2 Mq — confirms editorial unity.

Taken together, the evidence places **3 Meqabyan firmly in the Christian era**, with **strong Ethiopian-Christian theological character** consistent with the broader Aksumite-to-Solomonic range (4th–14th c. CE). The angelological dialogue-form is the most distinctive compositional feature; its closest analogue is the **EOTC angelological tradition** (Books of the Angels, Mäṣḥafä Mälaʾek) rather than any specific canonical book. Whether 3 Meqabyan was composed as **a companion volume to 1 and 2 Meqabyan** or as an independent homiletic text later collected with them is unclear: it shares their resurrection-doctrine and Christian-era citation pattern, but stands apart in genre (theodicy-dialogue rather than martyrology-narrative). Critical scholarship treats the three books as compositionally distinct; EOTC canonical reception treats them as a unit.

Translator's Final Note on the Meqabyan Trilogy as a Whole

With the completion of 3 Meqabyan, the full English translation of the three Books of Meqabyan now stands at **67 chapters, approximately 1,100 verses**. The trilogy comprises:

- **1 Meqabyan**: 36 chapters, narrative martyrology of Maqabis-of-Benjamin (the "Mattathias" figure of 28:33) and his five sons, set against the persecution of King Ṣiruṣaydan of the Chaldeans; closes with the testimony of an Ethiopian queen who chose Christianity over Alexandrian paganism (34:2), and the Aksumite pagan-pantheon catalog (Apollon, Artemis, Serapion — 36:29).
- **2 Meqabyan**: 21 chapters, structural mirror of 1 Mq — the **conversion-and-martyrology of Maqabis-of-Moab**. Maqabis-of-Moab is initially Jerusalem's destroyer (Ch. 1) but converts through the prophet Re'ay (Ch. 2–3), adopts the full Mosaic Law as a Gentile (Ch. 4), and dies in peace (4:32). His five sons are martyred by Ṣiruṣaydan (Chs. 5–6, with explicit parallel to 1 Mq Chs. 3–4); Ṣiruṣaydan himself is finally killed by the angel **Ṭelmiyakos** (12:13) in Acts-12 / Isaiah-14 hubris-and-fall mode. Resurrection-theology chapters (13–21) feature the **four-fold sectarian polemic** against Jews, Samaritans, Pharisees, Sadducees (14:1–7), the **nail-and-hair argument for bodily resurrection** (16:1–2), the **wheat-grain dying analogy** of John 12:24 / 1 Cor 15:36 (17:1), the **ubi sunt** to Earth and Death (Chs. 18–19), and the closing doxology (21:28).
- **3 Meqabyan**: 10 chapters, **angelological theodicy and resurrection eschatology**. The Devil-and-God dialogue of Chs. 1–4 establishes the framework — including the Satan-refused-Adam tradition (1:15), the Adam-replaces-fallen-angels doctrine (2:11–12), the Christological promise (4:1), and the definition of complete repentance (4:34). Chs. 5–8 turn to ethical exhortation, with the cloud-of-witnesses including Judith (8:7–8). Chs. 9–10 give the cosmological-sapiential and resurrection-eschatological climax, ending with the trilogy's final Amen.

The unified-trilogy hypothesis

The three books form a **unified theological-narrative architecture** with substantial cross-references and shared theological vocabulary:

- **Shared villain**: King Ṣiruṣaydan of the Chaldeans appears in both 1 Mq (Chs. 1–4) and 2 Mq (Chs. 5–12), with the same characteristics (predatory war, persecution of Maqabean youth, hubris-speech, divine punishment). He is the literary cement binding the first two books.
- **Parallel martyrologies**: Both 1 Mq Ch. 3 and 2 Mq Ch. 6 feature **five sons of Maqabis** martyred by fire, with **identical posthumous appearance to Ṣiruṣaydan with drawn swords at night** (1 Mq 4:8 ↔ 2 Mq 6:14). The doubled formula is decisive evidence of unified authorial design.
- **Two Maqabis families**: 1 Mq's **Maqabis-of-Benjamin** and 2 Mq's **Maqabis-of-Moab** are formally distinct (Horovitz 1905 p. 195; Cowley 1974) but narratively paired — covenant-Israelite and Gentile-convert versions of the same martyr-archetype.
- **Shared resurrection-doctrine**: Both 2 Mq (Chs. 13–21) and 3 Mq (Chs. 9–10) develop the resurrection-of-the-body doctrine with overlapping citations (1 Cor 15, John 12:24, Acts 23:8 sectarian polemic).
- **Shared closing formula**: 2 Mq 21:28 and 3 Mq 10:29 both close with **"From today and unto eternity, Amen"** — the single-Amen closing, distinct from 1 Mq's double-Amen.

- **Shared angelology**: Both 2 Mq (the angel Ṭelmiyakos at 12:13) and 3 Mq (the angels of mercy at 6:6) integrate named-angel theology of late-antique Jewish-Christian apocalyptic.

NT-era citation density across the trilogy

The trilogy as a whole contains **at least 25 direct or near-direct New Testament citations or echoes**, including:

- **Matthew**: 7:13–14 (narrow/broad way, 2 Mq 9:22–23); 8:12 + 13:42 etc. (weeping and gnashing of teeth, 2 Mq 16:12); 11:29 (meek and lowly, 3 Mq 1:1); 13:43 (shine as the sun, 2 Mq 13:14); 23:2 (Moses's seat, 2 Mq 14:24); 25:31–46 (works of mercy, 3 Mq 10:14–19).
- **Luke**: 1:51–53 / Hannah's Song (3 Mq 8:10–12).
- **John**: 10:11–15 (good shepherd, 3 Mq 4:1); 12:24 (grain of wheat, 2 Mq 17:1).
- **Acts**: 12:21–23 (Herod's hubris-and-death, 2 Mq 12:11–13); 23:8 (Sadducees deny resurrection, 2 Mq 14:7).
- **Romans**: 5:12 (death through Adam, 2 Mq 18:7); 11:33–34 (incomprehensible mind of the LORD, 3 Mq 9:10–12); 12:17 (not returning evil for evil, 3 Mq 10:23); 13:9 (love your neighbor, 3 Mq 10:23).
- **1 Corinthians**: 15:32 (eat and drink, 2 Mq 14:1); 15:36–38 (each seed its body, 2 Mq 16:4–7; 17:1); 15:51–52 (twinkling of an eye, 2 Mq 14:34).
- **2 Thessalonians**: 2:4 (man of lawlessness, 3 Mq 1:3).
- **Hebrews**: 11:32 (cloud of witnesses, 3 Mq 8:7–8); 13:6 (what shall man do, 3 Mq 7:1).
- **James**: 2:8 (love your neighbor, 3 Mq 10:23); 2:23 (Abraham friend of God, 1 Mq 36:22).
- **1 Peter**: 3:9 (not returning evil for evil, 3 Mq 10:23).
- **Jude**: 11 (way of Cain, iniquity of Balaam, 2 Mq 20:13).
- **Revelation**: 2:23 (searches heart and reins, 3 Mq 9:28).

Apocrypha / Pseudepigrapha parallels

- **1 Enoch**: 51:5 (shine more than the sun, 2 Mq 13:14).
- **4 Ezra / 2 Baruch**: 4:35–37; 7:32 (storehouses of souls, 2 Mq 14:33).
- ***Vita Adae et Evae*** (Latin recension; absent from Greek *Apocalypse of Moses*): §§12–17 (Satan-refused-Adam, 3 Mq 1:15), via Pettorelli & Kaestli, CCSA 18 (Brepols 2012).
- **2 Enoch**: 29:4–5 [longer rec. J]; cf. 31:3–6 (Satan's fall, 3 Mq 1:15).
- **Cave of Treasures**: §2 (Satan refuses Adam, 3 Mq 1:15).
- **Apocalypse of Paul**: §§14–18 (soul-journey at death; 2 Mq 20:7–13; 3 Mq 6:5–6).
- **Testament of Asher / 1QS**: two-spirits / two-thoughts doctrine (3 Mq 3:2).
- **Sirach**: 38:23 (vanitas, 2 Mq 18:11–14); 44 (praise of ancestors, 3 Mq 8:7–8).
- **Jubilees**: priestly-genealogy and Festal-calendar parallels throughout.
- **Augustine, *Enchiridion* §89**: hair-and-nails in the resurrected body (2 Mq 16:1–2; question of reassembly, not regenerative proof).

Dating and provenance — an honestly open question

Composition date: undetermined. Josef Horovitz, in his 1905 *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* article (the foundational Western scholarly study; see SOURCES.md §1.1), examined the surviving manuscripts and reported plainly: *"Alle Handschriften sind jung (18. Jahrhundert); die Entstehungszeit des Buches konnte ich nicht bestimmen"* — "All manuscripts are young (18th century); the date of composition I could not determine" (p. 195). This remains the cautious scholarly position. Subsequent scholarship has proposed a range of possible dates:

- A **high-medieval (post-14th c.) composition** has been advanced on the grounds that the Ethiopian church had no knowledge of the deuterocanonical Books of the Maccabees until well into the 14th century (cf. Wikipedia's summary, citing several modern Ethiopist scholars).
- An **earlier (Aksumite-era, 4th–7th c. CE) composition** is suggested by some internal evidence: the pagan-pantheon catalogue at 1 Mq 36:29 (Apollon, Artemis, Serapion), the Ethiopia-over-Alexandria preference at 1 Mq 34:2, the Aksumite Red Sea / Indian Ocean trade-catalogue at 3 Mq 1:8 (pearls

of India, white silk, red silk, brocade, fine linen), and the dense engagement with NT and patristic theological vocabulary. These features are consistent with a late-antique Aksumite-Christian setting — but equally consistent with a Solomonic-era continuation drawing on inherited Aksumite-era materials.
- **Later editorial layers** are plausible regardless of the original date: the possible post-7th-century Islamic-era touch at 1 Mq 36:4 (*"Ishmaelite son of slave-woman"*), and the modern editorial division into three books, both bear marks of post-original revision.

The current best statement of the dating question is: **Aksumite-to-Solomonic Ethiopian Christian composition (4th–14th c. CE); precise dating undetermined in current scholarship.** Direct examination of Cowley 1971 *JES* XII:1, pp. 133–175 (the Andəmta-tradition canon survey) is the most likely venue for further constraint and is identified in SOURCES.md as a Tier-2 verification target.

Manuscript structure: bipartite, not tripartite. A philologically important observation by Horovitz 1905 (p. 195) bears on the modern division into 1, 2, and 3 Meqabyan: *"In der Frankfurter Handschrift habe ich allerdings nur zwei auch ausserlich voneinander getrennte Abschnitte gefunden"* — "In the Frankfurt manuscript I have however found only two physically separated sections." Horovitz reports that the colophons of the manuscripts state the book consists of three sections, but the Frankfurt Codex Rüppel II 7 (his primary witness) marks only two divisions on the page. The boundary that modern editions place between 2 Meqabyan and 3 Meqabyan is **not present as a physical division in at least one significant 18th-century manuscript witness**. This means the modern three-book division (followed by EOTC Bibles, nehemiah-osc.org, Selassie 2005, Curtin 2018, and this translation) may be a relatively late editorial restructuring of an originally bipartite work. The translation here follows modern convention while acknowledging that the medieval structure differed.

Provenance: Ethiopia is secure; everything else is reconstruction. What is certain: the Meqabyan trilogy is an **Ethiopian biblical text**, composed in Geʿez, preserved by the EOTC, and not derived from the Greek 1–4 Maccabees of the Septuagint. The name *Maqabyan* and the patriarch *Mattathias* (1 Mq 28:33) appear to be the only points of contact with the Hasmonean tradition; the rest is a sustained engagement with Second-Temple martyrology, apocalyptic eschatology, and post-NT Christian theological vocabulary — distinct, characteristically Ethiopian, and without clear analogue elsewhere in the canon.

Previous English translations

This is not the first English translation of Meqabyan; it is the first **CC0-licensed** one. Prior English translations include:

- **Ras Feqade Selassie**, *Ethiopian Books of Meqabyan 1–3 in Standard English* (Lulu.com, 2008; 2005 Iyaric edition). Full coverage of all three books, working from the Amharic.
- **D. P. Curtin & B. Tesfaye**, *The First/Second Book of the Ethiopian Maccabees* (Dalcassian Press, 2018/2023). Books I and II only, working from the Amharic.
- **"tohdee"** (anonymous), *The First Book of Meqabyan* (GitHub Pages, October 2025). Bilingual working translation, chapters 1–5 only. Cites unpublished work by **Breandan Lumpkin**. License unclear.

All three are under copyright and are not used as sources for this translation. The present work renders from the modern Amharic at nehemiah-osc.org (which differs in places from the printed EOTC editions Selassie and Curtin worked from; sample variants documented in `/home/claude/geez/caveats.md`).

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The translation is AI-assisted, prepared by Claude (Anthropic), May 2026, from the modern Amharic of the EOTC Bible (nehemiah-osc.org compilation). It is a **single-witness, AI-assisted, pre-peer-review draft** — useful as a working English text and a starting point for serious scholarly translation work, but **not a substitute for collation against the Geʿez original and review by EOTC scholars and Geʿez philologists**. Users are invited to revise, correct, redistribute, and supersede this work as they see fit.

May this translation be of service to readers of every tradition.

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